

Customs and Excise Department

Controlling Officer's Environmental Report 2010

Preface

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) is a progressive and forward-looking Customs organization. As a law enforcement department, C&ED is responsible for a number of important law enforcement functions including anti-smuggling, detection and deterrence of drug trafficking, protection of intellectual property rights, exercise of trade controls duties, safeguarding of consumer interests, as well as collection and protection of public revenue on dutiable goods.

In discharging the Department's role as a law enforcement agency, we are mindful of our responsibilities to support the sustainable development of Hong Kong and are committed to ensuring the efficient use of resources. We also place emphasis on the customs enforcement and operations which will enhance the broader environmental quality well beyond the boundary of Hong Kong.

On the other hand, C&ED continues to achieve improvements in many aspects of in-house environmental performance on various areas like paper reduction, carbon audit on a pilot building, and use of plastic waste bags with degradable / recycled materials. In the coming years we will remain focused on measures which will lessen the Department's environmental impact.

Customs Enforcement and Operations for a Greener Planet

We are conscious of the need to deliver our services and conduct our operations in an environmentally friendly and responsible manner to demonstrate our green credentials. Appropriate environmental measures have been put in place in our operations for the betterment of the environment.

- **Commitment to the Ozone Layer Protection**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Customs Organization Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P) jointly launched the Project Sky-Hole-Patching in

2006¹ to combat illegal trade of ozone depleting substances (ODS) in the Asia Pacific Region. Although the Project was concluded on 1 November 2007, the notification mechanism as well as the cooperation amongst the Department, overseas Customs authorities and environmental agencies has been maintained.

In 2010, the Department checked 120 ODS licenses and relayed seizure information of two ODS cases to the RILO A/P. Between May to November 2010, the Department also participated in the Project Sky-Hole-Patching II. It was a global operation led by the World Customs Organization with a view to combating illicit trafficking of ODS. During the operation, the Department detected an inbound sea smuggling case of ODS and 100 cylinders of controlled refrigerants were seized.

- **Commitment to Clean Air**

Since mid-June 2005, the Department has conducted a territory-wide operation code-named Operation “Grand Rooster” to check the fuel tanks of heavy vehicles. In addition, the Department mounted 96 joint operations with the Government departments concerned, namely the Hong Kong Police Force, Fire Services Department, Transport Department and the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), aiming at neutralizing illicit fuel activities at various levels. These operations brought about a strong deterrent effect, thereby preventing the use of illicit fuel with high pollutant emissions by the vehicles.

- **Commitment to Cracking Down on Illegal Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes**

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal is a global environmental agreement on hazardous and other wastes which is applicable to Hong Kong. To halt the illegal transboundary movements of hazardous wastes in Hong Kong, the Department has joined hands with EPD in running a “Strategic Control Scheme on Hazardous Waste” since

¹ Phase I of the Project was rolled out on 1 September 2006, in which a monitoring and notification mechanism on suspicious shipments of ODS was established. Phase II was kicked-off on 1 March 2007 to include hazardous waste in the Project.

4 July 2007. The key feature of the Scheme is to detect and return shipment of hazardous wastes to the exporting countries under the Basel Convention.

In 2010, EPD, with the strong support of the Department, intercepted 45 containers of hazardous waste and successfully returned all of them to the exporting countries. This illustrates that the Scheme is highly effective in guarding Hong Kong against hazardous wastes.

Moreover, 39 pieces of seizure information on hazardous waste shipments were relayed to the RILO A/P and overseas counterparts for intelligence sharing and risk profiling purposes. The Department will continue to report suspicious shipments and seizures of hazardous wastes to the RILO A/P.

- **Commitment to Combating Illegal Trade of Hazardous Chemicals**

To support the control on international trade of hazardous chemicals, the Department has been working closely with EPD since the enactment of the Hazardous Chemicals Control Ordinance². The Department is responsible for guarding against illegal import and export of hazardous chemicals at entry and exit points, and conducting post-shipment investigations into suspected violation of licensing requirements detected in-town at EPD's requests under the Import and Export (General) Regulations. In 2010, 10 local entities were fined a total of HK\$70,000 for unlicensed import of hazardous chemicals.

Green Customs

- **Recycle of Rechargeable Battery**

In order to minimize the possible damage to the environment caused by the disposal of harmful materials and to conserve valuable natural resources, the Department has continued to put in efforts on the "Rechargeable Battery Recycling Programme" jointly organized by a

² The Hazardous Chemicals Control Ordinance (Cap. 595) was enacted in 2007. After its full implementation in July 2008, the import and export of hazardous chemicals are subject to licensing control under the Import and Export (General) Regulations, Cap. 60A.

tripartite working group consisting of EPD, conservation groups and the battery trade. In 2010, a total number of 1 130 000 (approx. 25 870 kg) rechargeable batteries seized by the Department were transported overseas for recycling.

- **Promoting Paperless Trade**

The Electronic System for Cargo Manifests (EMAN) allows electronic submission of manifests, so that air, ocean and river mode carriers are able to submit manifests to the Census and Statistics Department, the Trade and Industry Department and C&ED in one go. It serves as a one-stop channel for carriers to submit manifests electronically which has replaced the traditional paper-mode submission, thereby reducing paper consumption by both the commercial and government sectors.

- **Paper Reduction**

With the continuous contributions and efforts of our staff on various green housekeeping measures as well as the ongoing implementation of the Government Office Automation Programme and the Departmental Portal, paper consumption had been reduced from 37 138 reams in 2009 to 34 057 reams in 2010, representing a decrease of 8%.

Separately, the Department promotes the use of recycled paper which accounted for about 55% of the paper consumption in 2010.

- **Use of Plastic Waste Bags with Degradable / Recycled Materials**

The cleansing contractors of the Department have been required to use plastic waste bags with degradable / recycled materials for the cleaning work of the Department's premises. Such provision has been included in the contract as one of our green tender requirements. Apart from using environmentally friendly plastic waste bags, the Department continues to remind the contractors that the use of plastic waste bags should be kept to the minimum. Moreover, specially designed excrement-collecting bags, which are made of biodegradable materials, are used instead of plastic bags for Customs detector dogs working outdoor, so that the number of plastic bags used can be further reduced.

- **Training and Publicity amongst Staff and Green Housekeeping Measures**

Through promotional and educational programmes, the Department aims at ensuring that all staff members are aware of their environmental responsibilities. The Department has implemented a series of green housekeeping measures, targeting at minimization of resource consumption, waste recovery and energy conservation, and has closely monitored their effectiveness. Departmental guidelines are reviewed and re-circulated regularly to promote the concepts of green management. The Department also coordinates and encourages its staff to participate in environmental activities like the “Community Chest Green Day” and the World Wide Fund for Nature’s “Earth Hour” with a view to instilling environmental awareness into them. To raise staff’s awareness and sustain their momentums on practising various green measures, staff are also encouraged to attend seminars and briefing sessions on energy-saving measures and to exchange experience with other organizations in the public and private sectors. Besides, staff members are welcome to make suggestions on green initiatives and the Department is always receptive to their ideas.

Green Buildings

- **Rein in the Electricity Consumption**

Apart from continuing to implement various housekeeping measures for energy saving, the Department has taken the initiative to switch off all decorative external lighting of our premises before 11p.m. We had also requested Electrical and Mechanical Services Department to regularly check the components of the air-conditioning systems and chiller plants to ensure their efficient operation. All worn-out parts would be replaced to prevent wastage of electricity. While the full-year impact of the commissioning of the Customs Headquarters Building (CHB) in December 2010 on the electricity consumption had yet to be observed, a mild decrease of about 3% of the overall electricity consumption in our other non-joint-user premises was observed in 2010. It remains our target to control the increase of electricity consumption in 2011.

- **Carbon Audit on Buildings Scheme**

In support of the Government's commitment on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the Department has taken part in the carbon audit on buildings scheme and has selected the Kwai Chung Customhouse (KCCH) as a pilot building in 2008. The net emissions of KCCH for 2010 are 1 526 in tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent, or 0.069 in tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent per square meter.

Green Initiatives

- **Going Green on Manifests**

Since mid-2008, the Ports and Maritime Command (PMC) has been carrying out an outreach programme on the "EMAN Statement 1 Submission Scheme" to promote the electronic submission of pre-arrival seaborne cargo manifest by carriers. In 2010, another initiative named the "e-Sea Customs Clearance (e-SCC) Scheme" was also introduced to the forwarding and logistics sector. Up to now, 32 carriers representing over 90% of total inbound ocean containerized cargo throughput have agreed to join the EMAN Statement 1 Submission Scheme and over 30 forwarding companies have registered the e-SCC Scheme. In the foreseeable future, the percentage of manifest submitted through electronic means would increase significantly, meaning that the carriers and the forwarding agents can save more paper in printing manifests to the Customs per year.

Furthermore, in order to streamline the manifest processing, protect data security and accelerate information exchange among cargo selectors, we have worked on system updates to implement paperless cargo selection mode in the first quarter 2011. We will internally share information via secured departmental network and perform cargo selection workflow through computer software. The aim is to achieve more with less. By using the digital forms, we can, not only save time, ensure high accuracy but also achieve a paper saving for the Department.

- **Green New Headquarters**

The new CHB was commissioned in December 2010 and the various environmentally friendly and energy efficient measures, which were incorporated in the early planning stage with the advice and support from Architectural Services Department and Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, have been put into operation.

We are using zero ozone depleting refrigerant for the chiller units. We have installed occupancy sensors (lighting and air-conditioning units will be switched off when no occupant is detected in the office), built photovoltaic panels on the Building and installed vehicle battery charging facilities in designated parking spaces in the Building to promote the use of electric vehicles. We have also adopted green measures such as water-cooled air conditioning system (which uses less energy to provide a given amount of cooling), lamp with high-efficacy, and green roof (which reduces cooling costs due to increased building insulation).

We will keep up with our efforts and cooperation with relevant departments in overseeing the successful implementation of the various green measures in our new Headquarters.

Conclusion

We will sustain our efforts to explore and implement new green housekeeping measures. We will also continue to promote environmental awareness among our staff, and to encourage their contribution and participation in related activities. With our concerted efforts, we are looking forward to further improving our environmental performance.

Comments and Suggestions

This report can be viewed at our homepage at www.customs.gov.hk. Comments and suggestions on the report are most welcome. Please write to our Green Manager at Customs and Excise Department, Customs Headquarters Building, 222 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong or email us

at customsenquiry@customs.gov.hk.

Customs and Excise Department
August 2011