



Labour Department Environmental Report for 2003

The Labour Department and its Services

The Labour Department (LD) is the principal agency in the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for the execution and co-ordination of major labour administration and occupational safety and health functions. It has four key areas of work: Labour Relations, Employment Services, Safety and Health at Work and Employee Rights and Benefits.

There were two major changes in the organizational structure of the Department in 2003:

- a. the merger of the Department and the former Labour Branch of the Economic Development and Labour Bureau on 1 July 2003; and
- b. the establishment of a new Information Technology Management Unit (ITMU) in April 2003, with staff initially on loan from the former Information Technology Services Department and subsequently transferred to the establishment of the Department on 1 April 2004.

As at 31 December 2003, the Department had an establishment of 1 787 staff, accommodated in 39 office locations throughout the territory.

Our Environmental Policy and Measures

The LD is committed to environmental protection by acting in compliance with the relevant legislation and codes of practices as well as providing a green environment for staff and members of the public visiting its offices. The following policies have been adopted in pursuit of such commitment: -

- a. **Minimisation of Consumption**
The Department monitors stringently the effectiveness of various existing measures implemented under the Green Management Scheme, which includes minimisation of resource consumption, waste recovery and energy conservation. A detailed description of measures taken is [annexed](#) for general information.
- b. **Training and Publicity amongst Staff**
Through promotional and educational programmes, the Department aims at ensuring that all staff members are aware of their environmental responsibilities. Departmental guidelines have been issued to publicize green management. Besides, posters and circulars have been circulated to staff regularly to invite their participation in various environmental activities including the "Community Chest Green Day" and "No Smoking Day". In 2003, the Volunteer Work Team of the Department deployed staff to provide volunteer services for the "World Cleansing Day 2003". Staff members have also been encouraged to put forward suggestions on green initiatives.
- c. **Review of Office Practices**
The Department takes a proactive approach in reviewing office practices which are not environment-friendly and introduces new improvement measures whenever feasible.



d. Minimising Environmental Pollutants

In observing the guideline on infection control issued by the Department of Health regarding clinical waste disposal in our Occupational Health Clinics, the Department takes every measure to minimise the production of environmental pollutants and/or nuisance. Chemical wastes from the Occupational Hygiene Laboratory are collected by specialized waste collector. Asbestos wastes produced by the Laboratory are disposed of by appointed asbestos waste collector as required.

As the Department attaches great importance to environmental protection, a committee comprising directorate officers has been established to oversee the Department's environmental policy and performance. The committee has directed its efforts at various levels to achieve the objective of maintaining a green office environment. With increasing environmental consciousness amongst our officers and their support, good progress has been made in this regard.

Performance

Year	Paper Consumption (in reams)	Electricity Consumption (in kWh) (Note)	Wastepaper Collection (in Kg)
2000	36 730	1 087 069	20 987
2001	36 263	966 642	23 875
2002	35 720	992 678	41 687
2003	34 848	1 015 853	37 855

Note : The figures represent the electricity consumption of LD's offices in leased buildings only. The number of these locations was increased by 1 to 17 as at 31 December 2003 as compared to 16 as at 31 December 2002. Electricity consumption of LD's offices in multi-user Government buildings managed by the Government Property Agency and other Departments is not covered in this report.

In 2003, continued economic downturn combined with the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) struck a great blow to Hong Kong, pushing the unemployment rate to a record high of 8.6%. In adopting a pro-active and pragmatic approach in tackling the challenges, the Department chalked up a number of record-breaking achievement in its services in 2003, including a record-high job placements secured and vacancies solicited through the Department, a record-high settlement rate for conciliation of disputes and claims since the Asian financial turmoil of 1997, a significant increase of 220% in the number of convictions for summons on wage offences when compared to the figure in 2002. Special projects like Skills Enhancement Project, Loan Guarantee Scheme for SARS Impacted Industries, Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged, District Employment Programme for the Middle-aged and Graduate Employment Training Scheme were launched in the year.

Notwithstanding the increase in workload, introduction of new initiatives and the establishment of the ITMU, the Department successfully achieved a reduction in paper consumption by 2.4% and contained the growth of electricity consumption to 2.3% in 2003. In particular, this was the fourth consecutive year that the Department has achieved reduction in paper consumption.

Looking ahead, the Department will continue to sustain its effort in environmental management. It will continue to encourage all staff members to take all possible measures in waste minimization and energy conservation.

Feedbacks and Comments

If you have any comments or suggestions on this report, please send them to the Green Manager of the Department at:



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Annex

Green Housekeeping Measures Taken

Minimising Paper Consumption

- Using both sides of paper -
Internal circulars have been issued to staff members encouraging them to write and print on both sides of each piece of paper.
- Minimising copies of circulars -
In 2003, all circulars of the Department continued to be disseminated to staff members by means of e-mail. By doing so, a saving of approximately 1 200 reams of paper was achieved.
- Communicating by e-mails -
The Department has completed enhancement of communication among staff by extending its e-mail network to all the branch offices. By the end of 2003, 514 staff members have been provided with individual e-mail accounts. The remaining staff could also have access to the e-mail network through the shared use of 224 e-mail accounts.
- Adopting electronic version as the mode of publication -
The Department has adopted electronic version as the mode of publication for the Department's major publications since 2003. Relevant parties concerned, including members of the public, could easily access these electronic publications through the Department's websites. Examples of these include the Annual Departmental Report (with more than 100 A4 pages, printed on both sides in full colour) and the departmental staff newsletter, Staff Times (with about four to eight A4 pages, printed on both sides in full colour). The adoption of electronic version for these two publications enabled us to achieve reduction in paper consumption of around 13 000 hardcopies per year.
- Exchanging softcopies / diskettes within and outside Department -
Officers are encouraged to minimize the printing of hardcopies by communicating through e-mail. If e-mail communication is not feasible under special circumstances, transfer of softcopies on diskettes is encouraged.
- Minimising photocopies -
Starting from 2000, documents like Government gazette notices and internal proforma have been uploaded to the Government Office Automation Network for common viewing and access through the network to reduce printed copies.
- Using plain paper fax machines -
The Department has fully adopted the use of plain paper fax machines since 2000.
- Using double-side photocopiers -
The Department has been replacing photocopying machines with those equipped with double-side photocopying function. A total of 6 such photocopiers were acquired in 2003.
- Avoiding the use of fax leader pages -
Staff members are encouraged to use fax notes instead of cover sheets for outgoing faxes.
- Retaining original documents for circulation -
For those documents like departmental orders that require routine re-circulation, the original sets of documents would be preserved for re-use.



Minimising the Use of Stationery

- Using refillable ball pens -
All staff members are provided with refillable ball pens for their daily work.
- Minimising the use of envelopes -
The number of envelopes consumed was reduced from 1 256 560 in 2002 to 1 065 284 in 2003, representing a significant decrease of 15%.
- Minimising the use of loose minute jacket -
Staff members are encouraged to re-use loose minute jackets whenever practicable. The number of loose minute jackets used was reduced from 5 352 in 2002 to 4 998 in 2003, representing a decrease of 6%.
- Re-using decorative materials -
Serviceable decorative materials have been kept for re-use since 1998.

Waste Recovery

- Using the blank side of used paper for drafting or printing of internal documents -
Boxes are provided in all offices to collect paper, which has been used on one side only, for drafting purpose. Internal documents like departmental orders, advisory memoranda, circulars and file copies are printed on the blank side of used paper.
- Collecting waste paper for recycling -
In 2003, 37 855 kg of waste paper was collected for recycling.
- Using recycled paper -
About 99% of the paper consumed by the Department in 2003 was recycled paper, compared to 93% in 2002.
- Collecting obsolete personal computers -
In 2003, 406 sets of personal computers were collected for recycling through the Government Logistics Department's contractors.

Energy Conservation

- Switching off electrical appliances when not in use;
- Adopting the use of high efficiency lighting equipment;
- Adjusting the illumination of lighting equipment to the minimum required level;
- Adjusting the air-conditioning system to keep the room temperature to a reasonably acceptable level (about 24°C); and
- Encouraging staff to use staircase, instead of lifts/escalators, for inter-floor traffic.

With our concerted effort in adopting the above various measures in energy conservation, we have managed to contain our growth in electricity consumption in leased premises to 2.3%, notwithstanding the extension of computer network to enhance efficiency in communication and the increase in workload, which has unavoidably necessitated greater consumption of electricity.