

Labour Department Environmental Report for 2008

Introduction

This report covers the environmental performance of the Labour Department for the year 2008.

The Labour Department and its Services

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

As at 31 December 2008, the Department had an establishment of 1 839 posts, accommodated in 36 office locations throughout the territory. The actual expenditure of the Department in 2008-09 was \$1 070 million, covering \$916 million recurrent expenditure and \$154 million non-recurrent expenditure.

Our Environmental Policy and Measures

LD is committed to environmental protection by acting in compliance with the relevant legislation and codes of practices, meeting the commitments of the Clean Air Charter signed by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in November 2006, 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) *Implementation of Green Housekeeping Measures*

The Department has implemented a series of green housekeeping measures under the Green Management Scheme, targeting at minimisation of resource consumption, waste recovery and energy conservation, and closely monitors their

effectiveness. A detailed account of the 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 are reviewed and re-circulated regularly to publicize green management. The Department also coordinates and encourages its staff to participate in environmental activities including various environmental fund-raising events, green management seminars and eco-driving seminars organized by other bureaux/departments or outside organizations, with a view to promoting their environmental awareness and to share their experience in implementing the Clean Air Charter's commitments with others. Besides, staff members are also encouraged to make suggestions on green initiatives.

(c) ***Review of Office Practices***

The Department takes a proactive approach to reviewing office practices which are not environment-friendly and introduces new improvement measures whenever feasible.

(d) ***Minimising Environmental Pollutants***

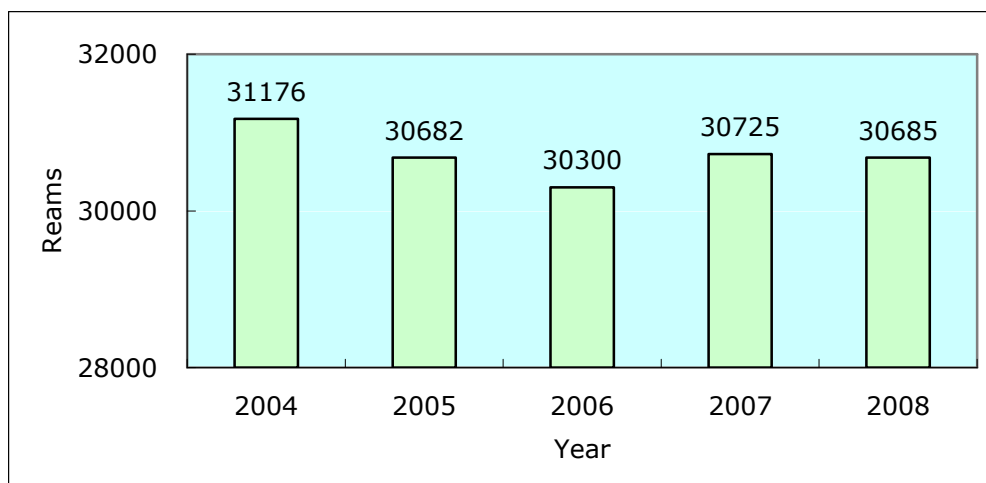
The Department observes the guidelines on infection control issued by the Department of Health in disposal of the clinical wastes of its Occupational Health Clinics, and takes every measure to minimise the production of environmental pollutants and/or nuisance. Chemical wastes from the Occupational Hygiene Laboratory are collected by specialized waste collector. Asbestos wastes produced by the Laboratory are disposed of by appointed asbestos waste collector as required. The Department also helps reduce air emissions by implementing plans and measures that are relevant to our operations for meeting the commitments of the Clean Air Charter.

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

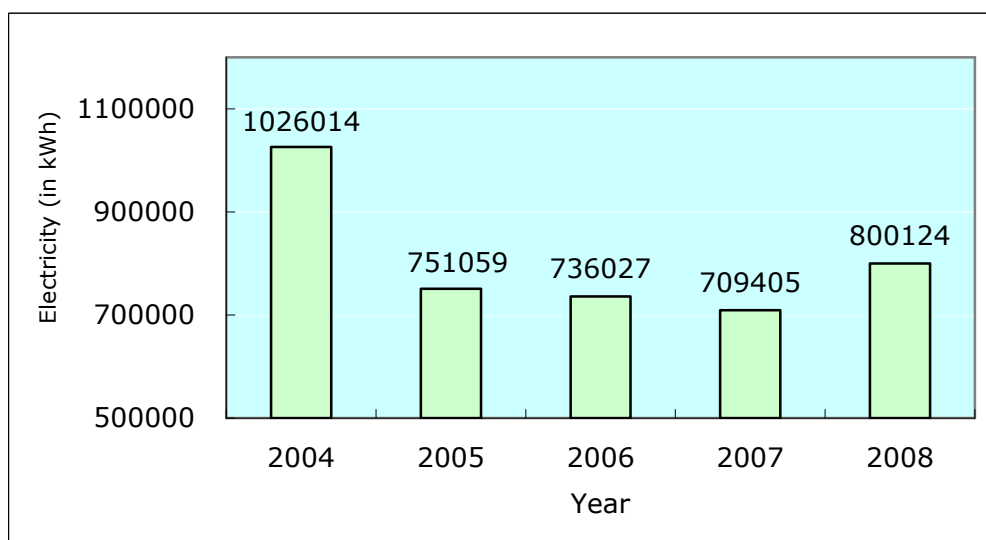
environment and to drive implementation of measures to minimize energy consumption and reduce emissions. With increasing environmental consciousness amongst our officers and their support, good progress has been made in this regard.

Performance

Paper Consumption



Electricity Consumption [See Notes (1) and (2)]



Emissions from Vehicle Fleet and Electricity Consumption

[See Notes (3), (4) and (5)]

	SO ₂		NO _x		RSP	
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
Vehicle fleet	-	-	601 kg	582 kg	35 kg	33 kg
Electricity (See note 6)	1 355 kg	1 528 kg	823 kg	928 kg	43 kg	48 kg

Note :

- (1) *The figures only represent the electricity consumption of LD's offices in leased premises for which the Department is responsible for paying the electricity bills. Electricity consumption of LD's offices in multi-user buildings managed by the Government Property Agency (GPA) and other Departments, for which we are not able to work out our share in consumption, is not covered in this report.*
- (2) *Increase in electricity consumption was recorded due to launching of services in new venues that were in full operation in 2008. If these new venues were excluded, the electricity consumption recorded by electricity meters in LD's offices in leased premises was 663 614 kWh in 2008 and 705 808 kWh in 2007, representing a 6.0% drop from 2007 to 2008.*
- (3) *SO₂, NO_x and RSP denote major air pollutants i.e. sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and respirable suspended particulates (RSP).*
- (4) *In 2008, there were 27 vehicles in LD, among which 26 used unleaded petrol and one used ultra low sulphur diesel. The total mileage travelled was about 406 710 km (413 950 km in 2007); and fuel consumptions were 40 549 litres of petrol (9.4% less than 2007) and 1 690 litres of diesel (16.1% less than 2007) respectively.*
- (5) *The indirect emission from electricity consumption is calculated based on the formula in the "Guide to Clean Air Charter Report Writing" published by EPD in January 2008. As mentioned in Note (1), the figures only represent the electricity consumption of LD's offices in leased premises for which the Department is responsible for paying the electricity bills.*
- (6) *As mentioned in Note (2), increase in emissions from electricity consumption was due to launching of services in new venues in 2008.*

In 2008, local employment market held up well in the first half of the year, but the rapid deterioration in the business situation shortly following the abrupt escalation of the financial crisis led to a rise in the unemployment rate to 4.1% at the end of 2008 from the 10-year low of 3.2% at mid-2008. With a proactive and pragmatic approach and given united efforts, the Labour Department continued to enhance the services on all front, and achieved notable results in various programme areas, including a record-high number of job placements (146 308) and vacancies (677 650) solicited from the private and public sectors; a record-high settlement rate of 72.7% for conciliation of disputes and claims since 1994; 958 convicted summonses on wage offences secured; and over 132 000 workplace inspections conducted to safeguard employees' statutory rights and benefits.

In the year, the Department, after reviewing the effectiveness of the Transport Support Scheme, implemented a range of relaxation measures to encourage the unemployed and low-income employees living in four designated remote districts to look for jobs and stay in employment. Besides, the second Youth Employment Resource Centre named Youth Employment Start (YES) was set up in March 2008 to provide one-stop career advisory, employment and self-employment support services to young people aged 15 to 29.

Despite the persistently heavy workload in 2008, we managed to achieve a 0.13% reduction in paper consumption (i.e. 30,685 reams in 2008 as compared with 30,725 reams in 2007). With the launching of new initiatives and the soaring workload in 2009, we anticipate difficulties in maintaining the same paper consumption level. Nevertheless, we will make continuous efforts in economizing the use of paper.

Notwithstanding the launching of services in new venues which led to an overall increase in energy consumption in 2008, the Department's great effort in energy saving was reflected in the 6.0% decrease in electricity consumption from 2007 to 2008 as recorded by the electricity meters in leased premises excluding these new venues.

To support the Clean Air Charter, the Department has adopted the following measures to minimize the emission of air pollutants by its vehicular fleet: -

- (i) running the vehicles on unleaded fuel or ultra low sulphur diesel;
- (ii) ensuring that the emission of pollutants from the vehicle is contained within the regulatory standards stipulated under various legislation, such as the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (Cap. 311) and the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) etc., by arranging regular servicing and preventive maintenance for the vehicles by the EMSD; and
- (iii) making it a compulsory requirement for our motor drivers to switch off engines of vehicles while waiting in order to avoid idling emissions and achieve fuel saving.

With the above mentioned practice, a significant 9.4% savings on petrol and 16.1% on diesel was recorded in 2008 as compared with 2007. Reduction in the emission of various air pollutants ranged from 6.6% to 7.3%.

Future Targets

Looking ahead, the department will sustain its effort in green management and to improve the air quality of Hong Kong. We will continue to implement the prevailing green measures in consumption minimisation, waste recovery and energy conservation, as well as appropriate measures to attain the objectives of reducing air pollution. To meet the government's target to achieve a 5% saving on electricity consumption in government buildings from 2009-10 to 2013-14, we will, despite the increasing level of activities in 2009, try our best to further reduce electricity consumption in the coming five years. In addition, we will continue our on-going effort to promote environmental awareness among staff members and encourage them to explore new ideas for operating in an environmental friendly manner.

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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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 2008, 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 per year.*
- *Communicating by e-mails –
The Department has completed the enhancement of communication among staff by extending its e-mail network to all the branch offices. By September 2006, all staff members have been provided with individual e-mail accounts to facilitate electronic communication within the Government network.*
- *Implementing Departmental Portal –
The Department launched the Departmental Portal since May 2004 to provide a platform for e-transactions within the Department, including on-line access to the e-Payroll System of the Treasury and the e-Leave System for handling leave application, thereby reducing in paper consumption as paper-based payroll slips and leave application forms were no longer required for most staff.*
- *Adopting electronic version as the mode of publication –
The Department has continued to adopt electronic version as the mode of publication for the Department's major publications in 2008. 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 –
The Department has successfully established a culture in which officers will minimize the printing of hardcopies by communicating through e-mail or transfer of softcopies on diskettes.*
 - *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 –
All photocopying machines in the Department have been equipped with the double-side photocopying function since 2005.*
 - *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.*
 - *Sending greeting cards in festive seasons by electronic means.*

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 –
Staff members are encouraged to minimise the use of envelopes.*
- *Minimising the use of loose minute jacket –
Staff members are encouraged to re-use loose minute jackets whenever practicable.*
- *Minimising the use of products which are not environmentally friendly.*
- *Re-using decorative materials –
Serviceable decorative materials have been kept for re-use since 1998.*
- *Using CD-RWs for record storage instead of CD-Rs –
Except for records which needed to be kept for long-term would be saved in CD-Rs (Compact Discs – Recordable), CD-RWs (Compact Discs – Rewritable) which allow re-use are used as the storage media for most electronic records.*

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 2008, 28,798 kg of waste paper was collected by the Department for recycling, excluding those in multi-user government buildings which were collected through contractors employed by the GPA.*

- *Using recycled paper –
100% of the paper consumed by the Department in 2008 was recycled paper.*
- *Collecting obsolete personal computers –
Over 1,000 sets of personal computers were collected for recycling through the Government Logistics Department's contractors in the past years.*
- *Redeploying serviceable furniture and equipment for further usage.*
- *Collecting used toner cartridges–
Toner cartridges for laser printers were collected and returned to suppliers for recycling. In 2008, 1,679 used laser cartridges were collected.*
- *Requiring the cleansing contractors to use degradable plastic bags/plastic bags with recycled content for garbage collection.*

Energy Conservation

- *Switching off electrical appliances when not in use.*
- *Adopting the use of high efficiency lighting equipment. Among others, our offices in Revenue Tower, Cornwall House and Southorn Centre were successfully registered in the Hong Kong Energy Efficiency Registration Scheme for Buildings since 2004, 2005 and 2007 respectively, as a recognition to their compliance with the Code of Practice for Energy Efficiency of Lighting Installations. Furthermore, in 2008, the tungsten/halogen light bulbs used for the spot light at the lobby area and conference rooms in LD's office premises in Harbour Building were replaced by the more energy saving LED light bulbs.*
- *Adjusting the illumination of lighting equipment to the minimum required level.*

- *Adjusting the air-conditioning system with a view to keeping the room temperature to 25.5°C in summer months in line with the advice of the then Environment, Transport and Works Bureau for all offices except those which need to set the temperature at a lower level for operational reasons.*
- *Encouraging staff to dress casual and smart in summer months.*
- *Installing thermometers in all offices to closely monitor the room temperature to ensure that it will be kept at 25.5°C in summer months.*
- *Ensuring proper maintenance of our departmental vehicles and using unleaded fuel.*
- *Reminding our drivers to switch off the vehicle engine whilst awaiting to avoid idling emissions and achieve fuel saving.*
- *Encouraging staff to use staircase, instead of lifts/escalators, for inter-floor traffic.*
- *Affixing 'Save Energy' stickers to power switches to remind staff to turn off air conditioning units/lighting not in use or keep them at suitable settings.*
- *Requesting all officers to set their personal computers at hibernation/standby mode which saved about 75% of electricity consumption when compared to computers stayed at normal mode, where appropriate.*
- *Procuring LCD monitors instead of CRT monitors when replacement of monitors is required.*
- *Appointing Energy Wardens in all locations to monitor the effective implementation of energy saving measures.*
- *Conducting energy audits to help identify room for improvement in energy conservation.*