

Environmental Report 2006

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Profile of Key Responsibilities

The Health, Welfare and Food Bureau is responsible for policy areas of health, food and environmental hygiene, elderly, social welfare and women's issues. It aims to formulate and coordinate policies and programmes:

- (i) to ensure that adequate welfare support is available to those in need;
- (ii) to safeguard and promote public health and to ensure that no one is prevented, through lack of means, from obtaining adequate medical treatment;
- (iii) to improve environmental hygiene and ensure food safety in the territory; and
- (iv) to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong.

2. The Health, Welfare and Food Bureau is organised into five divisions for the following responsibilities :

Health matters

- Policy matters relating to medical and health services, including provision of hospital services, fees and charges of public medical and health services, health promotion and prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases, regulation, self-regulation and development of medical nursing, dentistry and allied health professional and regulation of drugs.

- Policy matters relating to the development of primary health care services, long-term health care policies, regulation of medical technologies and research, development of Chinese medicine outpatient services, development of large-scale public health information systems, health policy research and anti-smoking and tobacco control policy.

Food and Environmental Hygiene matters

- Policy matters relating to food safety, environmental hygiene, agriculture, fisheries, animal welfare and management.

Elderly Services and Social Security matters

- Policy matters relating to social security and care for the elderly; and
- Elderly Commission.

Social Welfare matters and Women's issues

- Policy matters relating to social welfare provision including subvention, planning and manpower, relevant Funds, social capital and specific welfare services for family and children, young people and offenders, war veterans and people with disabilities, Trust Fund for SARS.
- Policy matters relating to women's issues, including the Women's Commission, impact of government policies, legislation and services on women, and international conventions on women's issues.

3. The estimated expenditure of the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau in 2006-07 was \$28,272.6 million. The Bureau had 19 directorate officers and 129 non-directorate staff as at 1 April 2006. Its establishment ceiling for 2006-07 was \$52 million.

Environmental Goal and Policy

4. The Health, Welfare and Food Bureau supports the HKSAR Government's initiatives to improve the environment and is committed to helping improve our own environmental performance by:

- (i) compliance with relevant environmental protection ordinances;
- (ii) promotion of waste reduction;
- (iii) advising other bureaux on the impact of their policies on public health;
- (iv) minimising the production of environmental pollutants and/or nuisance;
- (v) improving the general environmental conditions; and
- (vi) saving of resources.

Environmental Aspects and Impacts

5. The policies under the purview of Health, Welfare and Food Bureau may have environmental impact on various aspects, including waste disposal, air pollution and conservation of the environment. Such impacts would be taken into account when drawing up the policies.

Environmental Protection Measures

6. The following measures are relevant to environmental protection:

(A) Under policy areas

(i) Clinical waste

to map out with the Hospital Authority and the Department of Health the way forward in delivering Government's objective to dispose of clinical waste in an environmentally sound manner.

Performance

The Hospital Authority and the Department of Health will continue to provide input to the roll-out of the future legislative framework for the control of clinical waste and its management in Hong Kong.

(ii) Smoking and tobacco control

To reduce smoking prevalence and hence improve the air quality and public health, by discouraging smoking, educating the public, particularly the young, on the health risks involved, containing proliferation of tobacco use and protecting the public from passive smoking to the maximum possible extent. Implementation of the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Ordinance 2006 was a major step forward in this regard.

Performance

Hong Kong's smoking prevalence rate is among the lowest in the world. In 2005, 14.1% of the population aged 15 or above were daily cigarette smokers, representing a significant drop from 23.3% in 1982. With the enactment of the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Ordinance 2006, smoking has been banned in all indoor workplaces and public places in Hong Kong as well as some outdoor areas such as public beaches, parks, schools and hospitals since 1 January 2007. There are also tightened restrictions on promotion and advertisement of tobacco products. Compliance with the smoking ban has been

generally satisfactory. However, there is as yet no noticeable trend of reduced tobacco consumption since the expansion of the smoking ban, and the ban of smoking in all indoor areas has led to more complaints about concentration of smokers on the open streets. Surveys and studies will be conducted on the effect of the new smoking ban and further measures to strengthen tobacco control and reduce smoking prevalence will be considered.

(B) Within the office

(i) Waste minimisation

- ✎ extended use of recycled paper even for external communication
- ✎ collect papers used on one side only for drafting, photocopying or printing of single-sided file enclosures
- ✎ circulate posting notices, telephone lines, reports and consultation papers etc. through electronic means instead of using paper
- ✎ post internal circulars and other reference materials on internal bulletin board for access by staff
- ✎ send e-orientation folder, containing the soft copy of a bundle of circulars and papers, to new comers
- ✎ encourage the use of electronic means in both internal and external communication
- ✎ keep the number of paper publications and copies of circulars to the absolute minimum (e.g. by circulating a copy to staff only)
- ✎ use plain paper fax machines instead of thermal paper ones
- ✎ avoid sending original documents which have been sent by fax or email
- ✎ reduce the use of fax leader sheet
- ✎ extended use of virtual fax services
- ✎ use double-side photocopiers and place notices near photocopiers to remind staff of double sided copying

- 🍃 set "double sided" and "print in grayscale" as default printing modes for all printers
- 🍃 not to use envelopes for unclassified documents
- 🍃 reuse envelopes, loose minutes jackets and action tags
- 🍃 use less paper cups
- 🍃 reduce use of greeting cards
- 🍃 reuse of decorative materials at festive seasons
- 🍃 recover waste paper, newspapers and outdated publication for recycling by placing collection boxes at convenient locations
- 🍃 collect used CDs for recycling
- 🍃 recover printer cartridges for recycling
- 🍃 use recycled printer cartridge
- 🍃 extended use of refillable ball pens
- 🍃 implement the online booking system of conference rooms instead of keeping paper records
- 🍃 review regularly the actual need against monthly supply items that have expiry dates

Performance

Generally effective

(ii) Energy conservation

- 🍃 remind staff to switch off lights, air-conditioners and personal computers outside office hours
- 🍃 affix "Energy Saving" stickers at all switches in the office to remind staff the importance of energy saving
- 🍃 encourage staff to use staircase for interfloor traffic
- 🍃 use energy-saving fluorescent lights
- 🍃 remove unnecessary lightings at the reception area and office area
- 🍃 turn off lights during lunch hours and when part of office is not in use
- 🍃 arrange late-duty officers to conduct checking after office hours to ensure lights, air-conditioners in offices and conference rooms and communal facilities,

- such as photocopiers are switched off
- ✎ use energy efficient equipment, such as power-saving photocopiers, printers and computers
- ✎ set all photocopiers to energy saving mode when they are not in use for over five minutes
- ✎ keep room temperature at a reasonable level to avoid excessive air-conditioning
- ✎ affix stickers at all air-conditioning switches to remind staff to maintain indoor temperature at 25.5°C.

Performance

Generally effective

(iii) Others

- ✎ remind drivers to switch off vehicle engines whilst awaiting in order to avoid idling emissions and achieve fuel saving
- ✎ implement the Government's "Smoke-free Workplace Policy"
- ✎ organise competition to collect waste papers for recycling; a total of 1,229kg of waste papers was collected on one single occasion (24% over that of 2005)
- ✎ use unleaded fuel for departmental cars
- ✎ encourage officer to dress light, casual and smart.
- ✎ re-circulate "Energy Saving Tips" to all staff members at regular intervals
- ✎ explore usage of other energy saving devices, such as timer switch for commonly used office equipment

Performance

Generally effective

Environmental Awareness within the Bureau

7. To improve the environmental awareness within the Bureau, a directorate officer has been appointed as the green manager of the Bureau since 1993. The officer has provided a focal point for introducing and reviewing environmental protection initiatives. Staff of the Bureau would be encouraged to attend training/workshops on green management and will continue to identify measures, both under policy areas or within the office, to protect our environment.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
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