

Customs and Excise Department

Controlling Officer's Environmental Report 2007

Customs and Excise Department 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 control duties, safeguarding of consumer interests, as well as collection and protection of public revenue on dutiable goods.

Department's Environmental Policy

2. We are a progressive and forward-looking Customs organization. In discharging our role as the 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 and enhancing the environmental quality of the Department's services and activities to demonstrate our green credentials.

3. We are conscious of the need to deliver our services and conduct our operations in an environmentally friendly and responsible manner. Accordingly, we have put in place appropriate environmental measures in our various operations which include -

(i) Disposal of Seizures

In order to minimize the damage to the environment possibly 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 tripartite working group consisting of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), conservation groups and the battery trade. In 2007, a total number of 45 935 (approx. 1 150 kg) rechargeable batteries seized by the Department were transported overseas for recycling.

(ii) Combating Illicit Fuel Activities

The Department's enforcement operations against the supply, sale and use of illicit fuel in motor vehicles under the Dutiable

Commodities Ordinance, Cap. 109 have helped reduce air pollution and complement the enforcement of the Air Pollution Control (Motor Vehicle Fuel) Regulation. In 2007, we neutralized 5 marked oil detreating plants and 937 illegal fuel filling stations, and seized 950 153 litres of illicit fuel and thus prevented them from reaching the black market. During the year, we also conducted a territory-wide operation code-named Operation 'Grand Rooster' and checked 14 631 motor vehicles, 78 of them were found using illicit fuel. In addition, we mounted 101 joint operations with the relevant Government departments, namely the Hong Kong Police Force, Fire Services Department, Transport Department and the EPD, aiming at neutralizing illicit fuel activities at various levels.

(iii) Combating Illegal Trade of Ozone Depleting Substances and Hazardous Waste

We have actively participated in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Customs Organization Joint Project "Sky-Hole-Patching" in combating illegal trade of ozone depleting substances (ODS) and hazardous waste in the Asia Pacific Region. In 2007, we checked 205 ODS licences and identified one suspicious consignment. From March to December 2007, we relayed 116 pieces of seizure information of hazardous waste shipments to the UNEP, the Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Asia and the Pacific (RILO A/P), and overseas counterparts for action.

Although the Project was concluded on 1st November 2007, its notification mechanism will be continued in the form of a routine operation. We will continue to report suspicious ODS shipments and seizures of hazardous waste to the RILO A/P through the existing system for intelligence analysis.

(iv) *Promoting Paperless Trade*

The Electronic System for Cargo Manifests was launched in April 2003. It allows electronic submission of manifests, so that air, ocean, river and rail mode carriers are able to submit manifests to the Census and Statistics Department, the Trade and Industry Department and the Department in one go. It has effectively served 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.

Moreover, we will implement the Road Cargo System (ROCARS) for customs clearance of road cargoes in the third quarter of 2009. The ROCARS will accept cargo information electronically before the cargo enters or exits Hong Kong by trucks. Without the requirement of submitting additional paper documents, the shippers and truck drivers can enjoy smooth customs clearance at the land boundary.

(v) *Environmentally Friendly Products*

The Department promotes the use of environmentally friendly products and with our continuous encouragement, colleagues have become more receptive to using recycled paper. In 2006, 15% of the total paper demand of the Department was met by recycled paper. The percentage had considerably increased to 50% in 2007.

(vi) *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”, “Workshop on Clean Air Charter”, etc., with a view to instilling environmental awareness into them. Besides, staff members are also encouraged to make suggestions on green initiatives and the Department is always receptive to their ideas.

Environmental Performance

4. The Department had experienced another year of expansion in 2007. The establishment was increased from 5 202 as at end 2006 to 5 598 (or 7.6% increase) as at end 2007. During the year, an additional area of about 50 000 m² (or 25.9 % increase) being office / land space was allocated / leased to the Department to meet the rapidly increasing customs, trade controls service demands and operational activities at all fronts. The operational impact of new facilities at the Airport, e.g. Sky Plaza and Asia Airfreight Terminal T2, the commissioning of the Customs Vehicle Detention Centre Phase 2 at Ma On Shan and the provision of residential induction training for new recruits of Inspectors and Customs Officers by the Department (to meet the needs in connection with the commissioning of the new Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point and Shenzhen Bay Control Point in 2007) had all given rise to an increasing demand for electricity. Nevertheless, with the concerted efforts of our staff, we had managed to limit the impact of the overwhelmingly increasing service needs so that a mild increase (about 1%) of the overall electricity consumption for our non-joint-user premises was observed in 2007.

5. The Department has a close and on-going working partnership with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD), which offers professional energy efficiency and conservation advice, and conducts visits or walk-throughs for devising measures to achieve better energy saving for the building / office / workplace. An energy walk-through of the Kwai Chung Customhouse (KCCH) was conducted in 2006 and a series of electricity saving measures were proposed and implemented accordingly. With the completion of a series of energy saving works and measures, the building had achieved a significant 14% drop in electricity consumption in 2007. The Department will continue with such practice for other premises

as appropriate.

6. With the continuous contributions and efforts of our staff on various green housekeeping measures and the ongoing implementation of the Accessibility Programme, Government Office Automation Programme and the Departmental Portal, paper consumption had been reduced from 54 025 reams in 2003 to 44 345 in 2007.

The Way Forward

7. To support the global control on international trade of hazardous chemicals, the Department has been closely working with the EPD in the enactment of the new Hazardous Chemicals Control Ordinance (Cap. 595) in 2007. Upon full implementation of the new regulatory regime in July 2008, the import and export of hazardous chemicals will be subject to licensing control under the Import and Export (General) Regulations (Cap. 60A). 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.

8. On the planning of the Department's new Headquarters Building, we have actively worked with the Architectural Services Department and EMSD in devising various environmentally friendly and energy efficiency measures. We will adopt zero ozone depleting refrigerant for the chiller units, install occupancy sensor (lighting and air-conditioning units will be switched off when no occupant is detected in the office), and build photovoltaic panels on the building. We will also adopt such measures 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 for the project in the years to come.

9. 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

10. 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, 8/F, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong or email us at customsenquiry@customs.gov.hk.

Customs & Excise Department
October 2008