

Bye Bye Microbeads charter launched today

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (September 1) officially launched the Bye Bye Microbeads charter. Through this two-year voluntary phase-out scheme, the trades are encouraged to stop the production, importation and sale of personal care and cosmetic products (PCCPs) containing microbeads, with a view to eliminating microbeads at source and reducing their potential risk to the marine ecosystem.

Microbeads, with a size of less than 5 millimetres in diameter, are solid plastic particles in some rinse-off PCCPs for providing functions such as scrubbing, exfoliating or cleansing. Although the amount of microbeads constitutes a small proportion among all the microplastics released into the marine environment, they are the only category intentionally added to products consumed day by day.

The charter covers rinse-off PCCPs such as exfoliators and those for hair, body, facial or oral care. Participating PCCP manufacturers or importers can set their targets and timetables for phasing out microbeads, while retailers, hair dressing/beauty salons, trade associations and other interested parties will work together to promote the charter to their business partners and publicise microbead-related information to the public.

A spokesman for the EPD said that the trades' support is pivotal to the success of the voluntary scheme, and the department has been working closely with the trades in formulating the charter. The trades have been responding positively and are keen to join as one of their corporate social responsibility initiatives.

The EPD will offer various supporting measures to the trades, such as organising training workshops for their staff, and providing certificates and stickers for display in shops or on promotional materials. In addition, participants as well as their microbead-free brands will have their names and brand logos listed on a thematic website to help consumers make smart and responsible choices.

Details about the charter and the participation form are available at the EPD website (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/clean_shorelines/byebyemicrobeads/en/). Members of the trades are welcome to submit their participation forms by email or by post to the Secretariat of the charter from today onwards. For enquiries, please call 2501 7914 or email ByeByeMicrobeads@golin.com.