

## [EPD distributes face masks to frontline personnel of refuse collection and recycling trade \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, today (July 23) visited the North Lantau Transfer Station (NLTS) to inspect the distribution of face masks by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to drivers of refuse collection vehicles who use the NLTS's refuse transfer service as well as the operation of the station. The EPD will distribute approximately 80 000 face masks to the refuse collection trade and recycling facilities under the EPD to support the work of frontline personnel and thank them for standing ready to fight the epidemic.

At present, municipal solid waste (MSW) is mainly collected by refuse collection vehicles and then sent to landfills for direct disposal or through refuse transfer stations. To show care and concern to the some 1 000 refuse collection vehicle drivers who are self-employed or employed by private companies, the EPD has distributed around 50 000 face masks to them.

The NLTS that Mr Wong visited was located in Siu Ho Wan. As with other refuse transfer stations, the process of waste handling at the NLTS is mainly operated by machinery, with station staff not needing to contact or handle the waste manually. The contractor of the transfer station is required to regularly clean the waste tipping hall, the station floor, the waste conveyor system and machinery as well as the containers and trucks used for waste transfers, while all refuse collection vehicles are required to have their bodies washed before leaving the transfer station and landfills to stay clean and hygienic. During the epidemic, the EPD has added disinfectants in the vehicle wash facilities of the refuse transfer stations and landfills to enhance epidemic prevention.

When distributing masks to drivers of refuse collection vehicles before they departed from the NLTS, the EPD reminded them to stay alert to environmental hygiene and anti-epidemic issues. Mr Wong said, "Waste treatment is an essential public service and environmental hygiene is especially important at this time of fighting the epidemic. I am grateful to the concerned frontline staff for continuing to relentlessly provide the service amid the epidemic."

To assist the waste transfer sector in increasing resources to enhance the provision of workers' personal protective equipment and strengthen the disinfection of refuse transport vehicles, the Environment Bureau earlier launched the Subsidy Scheme for the Refuse Transfer Station Account Holders for Transporting Municipal Solid Waste to offer a one-off relief subsidy of \$8,000 to each of the eligible private municipal solid waste collectors.

Subsidies totalling about \$6.5 million were disbursed to eligible collectors to help the trade cope with current challenges and maintain environmental hygiene.

In addition, the EPD will provide around 30 000 masks to about 500 frontline employees of resource recycling facilities operators (such as WEEE·PARK, Community Green Stations and the Community Recycling Network), encouraging the trade to enhance employees' awareness of hygiene and to fight the epidemic together.

