

Joint departmental operation conducted at Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter and its vicinity to address marine refuse

A joint departmental operation was held on July 28 and 29 to conduct clean-up and enforcement actions at Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter and its vicinity to address the marine refuse problem. During the operation, a total of 14.5 tonnes of marine refuse was collected and seven fixed penalty notices were issued against littering.

A spokesman for the Inter-departmental Working Group on Marine Environmental Management today (July 30) said that since the establishment of the Working Group, the relevant departments (the Environmental Protection Department; the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD); the Marine Department (MD); the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department; and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)) have been working closely to enhance cleaning at bathing beaches and coastal facilities, typhoon shelters and boat anchorages, marine parks and other coastal locations. In addition, the Working Group will continue to take forward various measures to keep the shorelines clean including enforcement actions, patrols and field inspections, installing drinking fountains at coastal recreational facilities and organising and providing funding support for publicity and education activities.

The spokesman said that Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter is one of the priority areas for cleaning by the MD. The MD has directed its cleaning contractor to deploy a scavenging fleet of at least eight vessels to clean up floating refuse in the vicinity daily (including on Sundays and public holidays) and from time to time conducts special operations as necessary to clean up the refuse trapped between moored vessels and the seawall. The cleaning contractor also collects domestic refuse from vessels moored at the typhoon shelter twice a day.

The Working Group has noted that refuse enters the water more easily at the landing steps on either side of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter when there are busy activities of embarking on or disembarking from boats, especially during the holidays when marine excursions and leisure activities are more frequent. To address these problems, the MD, the FEHD and the LCSD have strengthened cleanup work during the periods when more people use the landing steps. The Working Group, together with relevant government departments, has also reviewed the locations and clearance frequencies of the refuse bins and recycling facilities near the landing steps to assist the public to properly dispose of waste and recyclable materials, hence preventing these items from entering the sea. In addition, relevant government departments will also conduct joint enforcement actions against littering along the coast from time to time and promote proper refuse disposal and good fish market practices to users of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter, yacht clubs and the Aberdeen Wholesale

Fish Market.

The spokesman added that keeping the shorelines clean cannot be achieved solely by the Government's cleanup operations. It is more important that members of the public jointly bear the responsibility to protect the environment by practising waste reduction at source to prevent refuse from entering the marine environment. The Government welcomes and thanks members of the public for initiating shoreline cleanup activities, showing their concern and care for the marine environment. A thematic website has been set up by the Working Group to facilitate the organisation and participation of marine waste reduction activities by the community. For more details, please visit www.epd.gov.hk/epd/clean_shorelines/index-2.html.