

Latest arrangements for handling tree waste after typhoon

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) announced today (November 8) that the temporary wood waste collection area in the Kai Tak Development Area will stop receiving tree waste after 6pm on November 10 (Saturday).

An EPD spokesman explained that the collection area was only set up for temporary stockpiling as a result of the huge number of fallen trees and broken branches collected after super typhoon Mangkhut, and that the site is not suitable for long-term reception or storage of tree waste. In the past few weeks, the quantity of tree waste received at the collection area has substantially reduced. In addition, the area has to be vacated for the long term development purposes. Consequently, since early November, the EPD has started to close the collection area in phases to facilitate the handling of the remaining tree waste there.

Currently, various government departments and their contractors are delivering the collected tree waste to the West New Territories (WENT) Landfill or the North East New Territories Landfill directly, while the collection area will be closed for receiving tree waste after 6pm on November 10.

To encourage waste reduction, reuse and resource recycling, the EPD earlier selected a portion of tree waste from the collection area and transferred it to the Community Green Stations (CGSs) in Eastern District, Kwun Tong, Sham Shui Po, Sha Tin, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun, for collection by members of the public or groups for onward reuse or upcycling. Interested parties can visit the CGSs to collect the tree waste for free before December 31, and they can call the CGSs to enquire about arrangements and to make appointments in advance. The collection area has already been closed for public collection of wood since November 1. Before its closure, a total of 435 logs were collected by 85 members of the public.

The EPD has all along been encouraging government departments and the community to minimise yard waste in accordance with the principle of reduction, reuse and recycling. To speed up the handling of a large quantity of tree waste and facilitate onward recycling, the EPD has procured an industrial grade wood shredder, which will be placed in the open space near T·PARK, and it is estimated that about 100 tonnes of tree waste can be shredded every day. The shredded wood will be utilised as far as possible to conduct various treatment trials, such as using them as a bulking agent in the composting process at the Organic Resources Recovery Centre; turning the shredded wood and wood pellets into solid fuel for boilers or cement manufacturing; or turning them into soil cover for use at landfills. To minimise the possible impact caused by the storage of a large quantity of logs or shredded wood in the open space near T·PARK, and taking into consideration the fact that the quantity of tree waste which can be recycled

through the above channels is limited, logs or shredded wood which cannot be utilised for the time being will be delivered to the WENT Landfill for disposal.

In the long run, the EPD will introduce more diverse proposals for treating yard waste. In addition to the aforementioned feasible treatment plans, which are subject to the outcome of trials, the EPD will work with other departments to explore further means to facilitate the recycling and reuse of yard waste.

In addition, a large amount of waste was generated by the super typhoon, causing a serious overload at refuse transfer stations (RTSs). In order to cope with the possible scenarios caused by the passage of typhoons in the future, the EPD will review the experience gained in handling the aftermath of typhoon Mangkhut and identify areas for improvement, with a view to formulating contingency plans to cope with any similar situations after the passage of typhoons in the future. The EPD will also proactively communicate with all stakeholders to co-ordinate the management of waste, so as to maintain the smooth operation of such work. Looking ahead, the Government will need to build new refuse transfer facilities and increase the capacity of existing RTSs.

During the passage of super typhoon Mangkhut, extensive damage was caused in Hong Kong and large number of trees were damaged or fell, resulting in huge quantities of tree waste produced. To help speed up the clearance of tree waste by various sectors of the community, the EPD set up a temporary wood waste collection area in the Kai Tak Development Area on September 21 so that the public could deliver tree waste to the collection area for temporary stockpiling. Apart from providing the public with a convenient location to speed up the clearance of fallen trees and broken branches, the temporary measure also helped to divert the delivery of tree waste to the collection area instead of the RTSs, thus effectively reducing the burden on RTSs and shortening the queuing time of refuse collection vehicles at the RTSs. As of today, around 8 000 truckloads of tree waste had been delivered to the collection area. Since September 28, relevant departments have been transferring the wood waste from the collection area to the WENT landfill by barges. As of today, over 15 000 tonnes of wood waste have already been cleared from the site and it is estimated that the clearance work at the collection area can be completed around the end of November.