

New general air quality monitoring stations in Southern and North Districts commence operation today (with photos)

Two new general air quality monitoring stations (AQMSs) set up by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) in Southern and North Districts started operation today (July 10) to provide more air quality information to the public.

The new AQMSs are located on the rooftop of the Aberdeen Tennis and Squash Centre and the Po Wing Road Sports Centre in Sheung Shui, and are in close proximity to the town centres. The data gathered will reflect the air quality of the more populated areas in the districts. The EPD has consulted the Southern and North District Councils respectively on the proposed locations of the new monitoring stations during the planning stage, with the proposal supported by the Council members. Apart from air quality monitoring equipment, solar panels have also been installed at the two stations, providing renewable energy to the facilities therein.

"The primary objectives of setting up the air quality monitoring network are to collect data for assessing the impact of air quality on the public, facilitate the formulation of air quality management strategy and evaluate its effectiveness. Factors considered in designing the network include the spatial distribution of the network, coverage of existing AQMSs, types of land development, local population, the distribution of traffic flow and pollution sources, topography and future district development plans. As such, a network of AQMSs is set up at various representative locations to reflect the overall condition of Hong Kong's air quality, instead of establishing a large number of monitoring stations all over the territory. The EPD also conducts review from time to time to enhance the network," a spokesman for the EPD said.

The EPD commenced construction of AQMSs in the 1980s to build up an air quality monitoring network, which is designed and operated to meet the highest international standards. With the opening of the two new monitoring stations, the number of AQMSs operated by the EPD has increased to 18, comprising 15 general stations and three roadside stations for measuring concentrations of major air pollutants at ambient and roadside levels respectively. Major air pollutants measured include respirable suspended particles (PM10), fine suspended particles (PM2.5), sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and ozone.

For more information on the AQMS network and air quality monitoring data, please visit the thematic website of the Air Quality Health Index (www.aqhi.gov.hk).

