

# Ombudsman probes illegal disposal problem and “HoHoSkips” recycling service for construction waste (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Mr Jack Chan, today (26 November) announced the launch of a direct investigation operation to examine the Government's recycling service for construction waste and enforcement against illegal disposal of construction waste.

Renovation works for domestic, commercial, catering and office premises generate significant amounts of construction waste. According to the report "Monitoring of Solid Waste in Hong Kong" for 2022 published by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), the daily quantity of construction waste generated that year was around 50,000 tonnes. The Government encourages construction waste producers, such as building contractors, renovation contractors, renovation workers or persons-in-charge, to reduce waste or carry out sorting for reuse or recycling, thereby saving costs and minimising the intake at landfills. Under the Construction Waste Disposal Charging Scheme implemented since 2005, construction waste producers are required to pay for waste disposal and have a duty to dispose of waste properly.

To facilitate the proper disposal of construction waste generated from small-scale renovation works by the public and small-to medium-sized renovators, the EPD launched a pilot scheme in February 2021 for the collection and recycling of construction waste at the district level. Subsidised by the Recycling Fund, the pilot scheme enables the public and the trade to make bookings via the mobile application "HoHoSkips" for the waste disposal service provided by recyclers.

Nevertheless, there have been media reports and public complaints from time to time about illegal disposal of construction waste in public places, especially on the roadside. This not only causes inconvenience and safety hazards for the public and road users but also affects environmental hygiene and requires additional public resources for disposal. The Office of The Ombudsman also notes that data suggests that the "HoHoSkips" service might have been underused.

Mr Chan said, "While the Construction Waste Disposal Charging Scheme has been implemented for nearly 20 years and the 'HoHoSkips' service for more than three years, illegally disposed construction waste is still frequently found on the roadside, causing environmental hygiene nuisance. Through this direct investigation operation, I aim to seriously examine whether there is any room for improvement in the management strategy for the recovery and

reuse of construction waste, with a view to providing a clean and comfortable living environment for the public. It is incumbent upon the EPD to formulate practical measures to enable the public and the trade to dispose of construction waste legally and appropriately, and to increase recovery, reuse and recycling rates of construction waste. Therefore, I have decided to launch this direct investigation operation to scrutinise the existing management of construction waste, including the EPD's control and preventive measures against illegal disposal of construction waste, specific details and operating situations of the 'HoHoSkips' service, how its effectiveness is monitored, and relevant promotion and publicity initiatives. Where necessary, pertinent recommendations will be made for improvement."

The Ombudsman welcomes views from members of the public on this topic. Written submissions should reach the Office of The Ombudsman by December 27, 2024:

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168-200 Connaught Road Central, Hong Kong

Fax: 2882 8149

Email: [complaints@ombudsman.hk](mailto:complaints@ombudsman.hk)

Furthermore, the Office of The Ombudsman notes the community is concerned about roadside skips, which not only cause obstruction and affect the safety of road users but also impact the environment and hygiene. The Office will collect information on this topic. Where necessary, the Office will conduct a preliminary inquiry to consider any need for a direct investigation operation, thereby examining this issue in detail and making proper recommendations for improvement.

