

Waste statistics for 2023 published

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (December 19) published the report "Monitoring of Solid Waste in Hong Kong – Waste Statistics for 2023". It presents the 2023 statistics on disposal and recovery/recycling of solid waste generated in Hong Kong, including municipal solid waste (MSW) (covering both domestic waste and commercial and industrial waste), overall construction waste and special waste.

The total quantity of MSW disposed of at landfills has dropped for two consecutive years to 3.97 million tonnes in 2023, and the average daily quantity was 10 884 tonnes, representing a decrease of 2.2 per cent from the average of 11 128 tonnes in 2022. Among these, disposal of waste plastics has dropped by 10.5 per cent; overall disposal of food waste has dropped by 3.4 per cent, in particular disposal of domestic food waste has dropped by 12.6 per cent; and disposal of waste paper and waste metal has decreased by 3.2 per cent and 9.5 per cent respectively. The per capita MSW disposal rate per day was 1.44 kilograms, down from 1.51 kilograms in 2022 by 4.7 per cent. Among the three major categories of MSW in 2023, food waste accounted for 29 per cent, followed by waste paper and waste plastics, accounting for 20 per cent and 19 per cent respectively, which are lower than the corresponding shares in 2022.

Besides, with the implementation of the Enhanced Plastic Shopping Bag Charging Scheme by the Government since December 31, 2022, the number of plastic shopping bags disposed of in 2023 was 3.72 billion, down from 5.43 billion in 2022 by 31.5 per cent, among which the number of flat-top bags disposed of has dropped by more than 60 per cent.

The overall MSW recovery rate rose for three consecutive years, with the latest figure rising from 32 per cent in 2022 to 33 per cent in 2023 and the increase in total recovery amount was more than 55 000 tonnes, among which the quantity of MSW recovered for local recycling was about 450 000 tonnes in 2023, representing an increase of 8 per cent compared to about 420 000 tonnes in 2022. The increase was mainly driven by the local recycling of plastic recyclables (around 7 000 tonnes), food waste (around 7 000 tonnes) and ferrous metal recyclables (around 16 000 tonnes).

An EPD spokesperson said that in order to achieve the vision of "Waste Reduction – Resources Circulation – Zero Landfill" by 2035, the current term Government is working at full steam to promote the culture of waste reduction and recovery, and to encourage active participation in waste reduction by citizens through the community recycling network GREEN@COMMUNITY and the food waste collection network. The latest statistics have shown a clear downward trend in MSW disposal and a continuous upward trend in the recovery rate, reflecting the Government's persistent effort in promoting waste reduction and recovery is gaining momentum.

Regarding construction waste, the Government implemented the

Construction Waste Disposal Charging Scheme in order to put the "polluter pays" principle to work and provide economic incentives encouraging the construction industry to reduce construction waste generation at source, as well as direct reuse of generated construction waste through project matching or storing it at public fill reception facilities for reuse in the future. For some small-scale works such as home renovations and shops demolitions, sorting and recovering construction waste on-site can be quite challenging due to limitations at the working sites. In this regard, in recent years, the Government has encouraged small-scale works to properly dispose of construction waste in a compliant and paid manner through publicity and education, strengthened enforcement actions, as well as a pilot scheme to assist with collection of construction waste.

Construction waste statistics in recent years showed the effectiveness of the strategies concerned. The overall quantity of construction waste generation in 2023 dropped by about 4 300 tonnes per day (9 per cent) as compared to 2022, to 45 560 tonnes per day on average, of which more than 90 per cent of construction waste (41 132 tonnes per day) was reused. Regarding the construction waste disposed of at landfills, the quantity increased by 300 tonnes per day (7 per cent) as compared to 2022, reaching 4 428 tonnes per day in 2023. The rise is believed to stem from an increase in both the numbers of companies that ceased operation and started new business in 2023 compared to 2022, thereby generating more construction waste associated with renovation and demolition works.

The EPD also encourages private enterprises to upcycle construction waste into products like eco-blocks, ceramic products and outdoor paving materials. In terms of land, there is an enterprise operating construction waste recycling facilities in the EcoPark. The EPD has also provided land for short-term lease for the purpose of recycling of construction waste. Moreover, the Recycling Fund has also subsidised different enterprises' projects on upcycling of construction waste.

Looking ahead, seizing the opportunity of increasing public participation in waste reduction and recycling, the Government will further promote to establish a green waste reduction and recycling culture in society. Apart from regulating disposable plastic tableware and other plastic products in phases, the Government will launch a host of initiatives. These include: (1) Continue to encourage private residential premises to participate in the Waste Reduction and Recycling Charter, and enhance public awareness and habits of recycling through measures such as optimising the service hours of the recycling facilities under GREEN@COMMUNITY, doubling the number of residential food waste collection facilities in Hong Kong, as well as strengthening the publicity and education on waste reduction and recycling in the community and schools; (2) Introduce a bill into the Legislative Council to establish a common legislative framework of producer responsibility schemes on different products, thereby facilitating the progressive inclusion of such products as plastic beverage containers and beverage cartons in future; (3) With facilitation measures in place, increase the useable area and extend the lease term of short-term tenancy sites designated for recycling operations to provide the recycling trade with more

room for upcycling.

In the meantime, the Government is building an advanced and efficient network of modern waste-to-energy facilities at full steam, including the Integrated Waste Management Facilities Phase 1 (I·PARK1) which is under construction near Shek Kwu Chau; and the Integrated Waste Management Facility Phase 2 (I·PARK2) which is available for open tendering by the end of this year. The goal is to achieve zero landfill with the efforts by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and citizens.

The report and "Hong Kong 2023 Municipal Solid Waste – At a Glance" are both available in electronic format and can be obtained from the EPD website at www.wastereduction.gov.hk/en/assistancewizard/waste_red_sat.htm.

Government posts land resumption notices for public housing developments at Site 4a (Remaining Part) of Kam Tin South, Yuen Long

The Lands Department today (December 19) posted land resumption notices in accordance with section 4 of the Lands Resumption Ordinance (Chapter 124) for the implementation of public housing developments at Site 4a (Remaining Part) of Kam Tin South, Yuen Long.

Three private lots with a total area of about 9 400 square metres will be resumed. The said land will revert to the Government upon the expiry of a period of three months from the date of affixing the notices (i.e. March 20, 2025).

The Government will maintain close liaison with the relevant land owners and affected parties, and properly handle their compensation and rehousing matters.

The public housing developments at Site 4a (Remaining Part) of Kam Tin South, Yuen Long, will provide about 700 public housing units upon completion.

DH steps up enforcement against illegal smoking in statutory no smoking areas of shopping malls (with photos)

Tobacco and Alcohol Control officers of the Department of Health (DH) conducted a special operation in shopping malls across the territory for three consecutive days (December 16 to 18), stepping up enforcement against illegal smoking in statutory no smoking areas (NSAs) of shopping malls and prosecution of smoking offenders, as well as enhancing public education through the distribution of leaflets. The officers conducted a total of 155 inspections and issued 36 fixed penalty notices to offenders during the operation.

"To protect public health, it is the Government's tobacco control policy to discourage smoking, contain the proliferation of tobacco use and minimise the impact of second-hand smoke on the public. Stepped-up enforcement actions against smoking offences in shopping malls aim at further protecting the public from the harm of second-hand smoke," a spokesman for the DH said.

Any person who commits an act of smoking in NSAs or in public transport carriers will be liable to a fixed penalty of \$1,500. Tobacco and Alcohol Control Inspectors will prosecute smoking offenders without prior warning.

"We appeal to smokers to quit smoking as early as possible for their own health and that of others. They are encouraged to call the DH's Integrated Smoking Cessation Hotline on 1833 183. The hotline is operated by registered nurses, providing professional counselling services on smoking cessation," the spokesman said.



Red flags hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 19) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Incorporation of AlipayHK into Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme to take effect January 1, 2025

The Transport Department announced today (December 19) that, in addition to Octopus, AlipayHK will be incorporated into the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme with effect from January 1, 2025, allowing citizens an extra electronic payment option under the Scheme. When members of the public travelling on major public transport services pay for single journey fares with AlipayHK EasyGo or take MTR services by using the QR Code on the "MTR Mobile" application with AlipayHK as the payment source, the relevant fares will be eligible for the calculation of public transport fare subsidies.

Public transport coverage of AlipayHK under the Scheme

Under the Scheme, when one uses AlipayHK to pay single journey fares for the following public transport services (please see Annex for more details), the relevant fares will be eligible for the calculation of public transport fare subsidies:

1. MTR railway services (except Airport Express, Light Rail and MTR Buses);
2. franchised buses, including Citybus, KMB, Long Win Bus and New Lantao Bus;
3. tram;

4. 11 designated ferry routes; and
5. 175 designated green minibus routes.

AlipayHK EasyGo supports the payment of single journey fares for the above public transport services. However, it cannot be used for purchasing designated transport tickets such as monthly passes or day passes at the moment.

Subsidy calculation and collection for AlipayHK users

Single journey fares for public transport services paid with AlipayHK will be automatically recorded in the relevant AlipayHK account. The Government will provide a subsidy amounting to one-third of the actual monthly public transport expenses in excess of \$400, subject to a maximum of \$400 per month for each AlipayHK account. This subsidy calculation method is the same as that for Octopus users. From the 16th of each month, AlipayHK users can collect the subsidy of the previous month via the AlipayHK mobile application. The period for collecting the subsidy is three months.

Separate calculation of public transport fares paid with AlipayHK and Octopus

Upon the incorporation of AlipayHK into the Scheme, there will be no change to the existing arrangements for recording, calculating and collecting subsidies via Octopus. Public transport expenses recorded separately under the AlipayHK account and Octopus cannot be combined for the calculation of public transport fare subsidies.

Members of the public can visit the website (ptfss.gov.hk) for details of the Scheme. For enquiries, AlipayHK users can visit the AlipayHK mobile application or call the hotline at 3002 0905, while Octopus users can visit the Octopus mobile application, the website (subsidy-enquiry.ptfss.hk) or call the hotline at 2969 5500.