

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Waste Management Policy and Guidelines

Waste Management Policy

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) recognizes the environmental impact of the products and services we use, in particular our ecological footprint and the waste impact on our local and global environment.

As a socially responsible educational institution committed to sustainable development, we strive to reduce these impacts by adopting sound and pragmatic procurement and waste management practices, as well as engaging our stakeholders by raising awareness, promoting sustainable behaviour and embracing the “Polluter Pays” principle, wherever appropriate.

The University's Waste Management Policy is based on a ‘waste management hierarchy’ which emphasizes a ‘6Rs’ principle – Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair and Recycle/Recover. We accord top priority to waste reduction at source and encourage cyclical use of resources with disposal as the last resort. The ‘6Rs’ principle, elaborated in the Waste Management Guidelines, is adopted with reference to the developments in waste management which are relevant to a university setting.

We are committed to putting in place effective waste management that exceeds the legislative and regulatory requirements. We emphasize implementing procedures to prevent immediate and future pollution or harm to health, and continually improving our performance.

Waste Management Guidelines

Roles of Stakeholders in General

All staff and students as well as departments/units and contractors/caterers shall support the University in ensuring an effective waste management by adhering to the ‘6Rs’ principle, as elaborated below:

Rethink

- Review consumption practices; think twice before buying and take note of materials discarded to explore ways to use them more efficiently.

Refuse

- Avoid making unnecessary purchases and forgo buying items with low quality/durability, toxic content or limited usefulness.

Reduce

- Check inventory before making a decision to purchase new goods.
- Purchase items that can be effectively reused/recycled/repaired, and, if available, choose items made with recycled materials/content.

- Go for items with minimal packaging. Get suppliers to take back unwanted packaging when delivery is made, whenever possible.
- Avoid food waste when dining or organizing events by not ordering excessive food.
- Reduce the use of toxic materials via choosing less toxic or non-toxic alternatives.
- Please refer to the University's Green Purchasing Policy and Green Purchasing Guidelines for a list of commonly-purchased products and their recommended green specifications to reduce the environmental impact of our procurement behaviour.

Reuse

- Give unwanted items to parties who can make use of them.
- Use reusable cups, dishware and tableware at meetings and events.
- Support the University's 'Bring Your Own' campaign to help reduce waste generation and disposal.
- Instead of purchasing single-serving bottled water, 'bring your own bottle' and refill it at water dispensers.
- Please refer to the University's Water Dispensers Map for the locations of water dispensers.

Repair

- Attempt to repair items before replacing them, whenever possible.

Recycle/Recover

- Separate usable resources from wastes at source, whenever possible (separation of reusable, recyclable and recoverable materials from waste, such as waste heat and waste oil, and turn them into energy or other useful materials).
- Support on-site composting at university canteens/restaurants by separating food waste properly.
- Please refer to the 'Recycling Tips' and 'Recycling Locations' posters for information on collection points for various recyclable/ reusable resources on campus.

Roles of Departments/Units

For effective waste management, departments/units shall take actions to reduce wastes as far as practicable in accordance with the waste management hierarchy, prevailing regulations and best practices.

Heads of departments/units shall

- (i) make available adequate resources and facilities for the effective implementation of this Policy and Guidelines; and
- (ii) designate one or more staff members to be responsible for the implementation including
 - (a) dissemination of this Policy and Guidelines and subsequent updates to all members of the department/unit for information and appropriate action;
 - (b) working closely with the Estates Management Office (EMO) and the appointed waste management contractors on the necessary process control and monitoring of wastes and recyclables; and
 - (c) reporting any waste management problem to EMO.

The following are some general directives for waste management actions to be performed by the departments/units.

Paper Waste

- Go electronic and reduce paper consumption whenever possible and appropriate, e.g. using e-agenda and e-minutes for meetings, e-flyers for publicity, e-forms for registration/survey and e-invitations for functions/events.
- Engage the University's contracted service provider(s) for direct waste paper collection (including confidential papers) from the office/workplace, using the designated recycled bags provided. Please contact the Campus Planning and Sustainability Office for details. (The service provider will record the weight of the waste paper collected from all the departments/units and provide these figures to the University every month.)
- To enhance the effective use of paper waste recycling bins, sizable carton boxes or cardboards shall not be placed into paper waste recycling bins. Carton boxes shall be unfolded, flattened and placed at carton box recycling cages as designated by EMO. Please refer to the University's [list of locations of the carton box recycling cages](#) on campus.

Event-related Waste

- No single-serving bottled water shall be provided in indoor meetings and events organised by university units under normal circumstances.
- Please contact the Campus Planning and Sustainability Office to find out more about alternatives to bottled water in events and support from the University.
- Corsages shall no longer be provided at university events under normal circumstances.
- Please refer to the University's [Guidelines for Sustainable Event Planning and Management](#) for more guidelines on green event planning.

Used Furniture and Equipment

- Departments/units are expected to reuse their existing furniture/equipment when planning for relocation and/or renovation.
- In case that some furniture and equipment are no longer needed, departments/units should ensure that all fixed asset items must secure disposal approval from the University by following the [Guidelines for Fixed Asset](#).
- Departments/units shall post a notice in the ITSC weekly Mass Mail to invite other departments/units to take up unwanted furniture/equipment (which are non-asset items or non-bidding assets already with disposal approval from the Business Office) on a first-come-first-served basis. Donation to charities shall be explored as the last resort before disposal.
- Before purchasing any new furniture/equipment, departments/units shall first consider whether there is used and usable furniture/equipment being offered by another department, by referring to ITSC's weekly Mass Mail and Business Office's [General Circular](#) for obsolete items being written off and made available for bidding.
- A fee based on a full cost recovery approach and the polluter pays principle will be studied and adopted in future waste reduction plan.

Municipal Solid Waste

- To prepare for the government's municipal solid waste charging scheme, departments/units shall support the University's measures and campaigns to reduce waste production, enforce waste separation and increase recycling rate, such as waste auditing and tracking, reduction of roadside litter bins, and pairing up of roadside litter bins with recycling bins.
- The University shall set up recycling facilities at strategic locations covering various academic, administration, research and amenities buildings as well as staff residences and student hostels.
- Departments and units shall support the University's programmes/initiatives to raise awareness of our staff and students on proper waste management practices, and help disseminate the pertinent information in facilities/premises under their management, such as classrooms, offices, hostels and staff residences.
- Departments and units shall disseminate the University's instructions and guidelines on waste reduction and recycling to their responsible frontline staff and ensure compliance of new procedures/requirements.

Canteen Waste

- Caterers must ensure regular removal of waste oil and grease from under-sink grease traps (where applicable) and proper disposal of waste oil and grease for legal compliance.
- Caterers must ensure proper disposal of waste cooking oil. They are encouraged to join the University's green programme, and permit the registered waste cooking oil collector engaged by CUHK to pick up their waste cooking oil for conversion to biodiesel.
- Caterers shall take appropriate measures to reduce waste to landfills, particularly food waste and disposable utensils, and cooperate with the University on initiatives to promote a less waste culture on campus. Caterers are encouraged to offer preferential measures to encourage diners to ask for 'less rice/noodles' if the diners have a small appetite. Caterers are also expected to encourage diners to bring their own utensils if takeaway is necessary and to impose a higher charge on the use of disposal utensils to minimize their use.
- Waste management requirements, if deemed appropriate and necessary, should be included in all future tenders and contracts for caterers on campus, if they are not already in the existing contracts/tenders.
- Details regarding proper disposal of waste cooking oil and waste reduction are to be determined by the canteen management committees and to be promulgated in the University's operational guidelines on canteen waste management.

Hazardous Waste

- Chemical waste and clinical waste must be collected by licensed collectors for proper disposal.
- Owners should consider giving unused and unexpired chemicals to other users before disposal. If assistance is needed in identifying other users for the surplus chemicals, the Dangerous Goods Unit should be contacted.

- Unwanted lead-acid batteries are classified as chemical waste. If the battery is part of a piece of scrapped equipment, the owner should remove the battery from the scrapped equipment before the licensed contractor can collect the battery.
- Other rechargeable batteries (e.g. batteries of mobile phones and cameras) should be disposed of into the relevant collection bins managed by EMO.
- Irradiating apparatus and radioactive substances are regulated by the Radiation Ordinance (Cap. 303). Users shall ensure that there is a corresponding radiation license before they place an order to purchase these apparatuses or radioactive substances. Relocation of an irradiating apparatus to other premises requires a new license.
- Prior approval from the Radiation Board of Hong Kong shall be sought before the disposal or transfer of the irradiating apparatus. Radioactive waste shall also be disposed of by the methods approved by the Radiation Board of Hong Kong.
- Laboratory-in-charge is required to prepare inventory lists for chemicals, radioactive and biological agents used/kept in their premises.
- Fluorescent tubes/bulbs containing mercury compounds shall be protected from breakage and disposed properly into [designated collection boxes](#) set up by EMO. EMO staff will notify the University Safety Office (USO) for proper disposal.
- Staff members concerned should be trained in the proper segregation and storage of chemical, radioactive and clinical waste before collection. More information can be found in USO's [Laboratory Safety Manuals](#) and [website](#). If in doubt, staff members should consult USO before further actions.

Construction Waste

- Contractors undertaking construction/renovation works within campus must, under the supervision and monitoring of Campus Development Office and/or EMO, observe the following regulations and guidelines to minimize waste generation, reuse resources and ensure proper handling of waste.
 - [Regulations for contractors working within the university campus](#)
 - [Environmental guidelines for construction sites](#)

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