

Promoting Sustainable Consumption

推廣可持續消費

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

The Council promotes and supports sustainable consumption through comparative product testing and dissemination of information which enables consumers to make environmentally friendly choices, and also encourages them to help conservation of natural resources and waste reduction.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

In comparative product testing, environmental parameters such as energy efficiency, recyclability of products and packaging materials, durability and emissions of volatile organic compounds are often incorporated with a view to informing consumers about the use of products and their impacts on health and the environment. We also send submissions to the Government to support initiatives in establishing legislations for environmental protection.

Consumer Council Urges Manufacturers to Remove Mercury and Cadmium from Single-Use Batteries

Batteries are widely used in a variety of electrical devices. Apart from their lifespan, consumers should also pay attention to their heavy metals content.

The Council tested 40 models of AA and AAA size single-use batteries comprising 22 alkaline and 18 zinc carbon models.

Though all alkaline models passed the heavy metals requirement under the European Union (EU) directive on environmental protection, excessive amount of mercury and cadmium was detected in some of the zinc carbon models. Mercury was found at seven times of the set limit in one model while cadmium in another model was six times of the set limit.

According to the EU directive, batteries should also bear appropriate labelling information if they contain more than 0.004% lead content. It came out that the lead content in all tested zinc carbon batteries exceeded the threshold. However, some models did not carry the additional labelling.

推廣可持續消費的重要性

本會測試產品及發布資訊，推廣及支持可持續消費，幫助消費者選擇較環保的產品，以達到保護自然資源，減少廢物的目的。

我們完成的任務

我們的產品測試，也加進環境因素的評估，例如能源效率、產品及包裝的可循環再生性、耐用程度及會否釋出揮發性有機化合物等，藉以讓消費者知悉產品對環境及健康的影響。我們亦就政府的各種有關環境保護的提案發表意見以示支持。

呼籲製造商除去電池中的水銀及鎘

電池廣泛應用於多種電器，消費者在關注電池壽命外，也應留意電池的重金屬問題。

本會測試了40款AA及AAA一次性電池的重金屬含量，當中22款為鹼性電池，其餘18款屬碳性電池。

結果發現，所有鹼性電池的重金屬含量均符合歐盟環保指令的標準，但有部份碳性電池的水銀及鎘含量卻超標。測試發現，其中一樣本的水銀含量是標準上限七倍，而另一個樣本的鎘是標準上限的六倍。

根據歐盟的環保指令，若電池鉛含量超過0.004%，便應在電池上附有適當的標示。所有碳性電池的測試型號，鉛含量均超過上述標籤參考值，但有部份型號未有附加有關標註。

本港目前並無法例規管一次性電池的重金屬含量，也缺乏回收制度。本會呼籲廠商考慮生產過程中除去水銀和鎘等重金屬，避免污染環境。



In Hong Kong, there is neither regulation on heavy metals content nor recycling system for single-use batteries. Since heavy metals may pollute the environment, the Council urged manufacturers to remove heavy metals including mercury and cadmium, in battery production to avoid pollution.

Call for Legislation to Protect Consumer Interest in Organic Foods

While the market of organic products continued to grow, the Council kept a watchful eye on organic products and offered tips to consumers in a timely manner.

As organic foods cannot be identified by their appearance or by chemical analysis of the products, consumers have to rely solely on the certification of organic products. In a study report on the subject, the Council supported calls to introduce specific regulation governing the production, certification and labelling of organic foods in Hong Kong.

As great price differences existed between organic food and conventional food, the possibility of abusing organic claims by the trade could not be ruled out. The Council's study report cited a case in which a vegetable stall owner pleaded guilty to a charge under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance of supplying vegetables that were falsely claimed to have organic authentication in March 2010.

The report also cited a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre in the same year, which showed that only about 10% of the surveyed stalls (14 out of 149 stalls) in wet markets claiming to sell organic vegetables could provide organic certifications.

Be Mindful of Skin Care Products Claimed to be Organic or Natural

Skincare products marketed as "organic" or "natural" are attracting more and more consumers. The Council conducted a study and urged consumers to find out how natural or organic the products were.

Our inspection of the product labels discovered that some products described as "organic" also contained petrochemicals and synthetic preservatives and might not be as natural as one would expect. In addition, though some products were claimed to be free of synthetic fragrances and colorants, such claims could not be taken to mean that they met organic standards or contained organic ingredients.

建議立法保障消費者購買真正有機食物

有機產品的市場不斷增長，本會經常留意市面的有機產品並為消費者提供適時的建議。

有機食物不能憑外觀或化學分析判斷，消費者只能依賴有機食物的認證，例如符合來源地標準的官方有機標籤，或獲認可認證機構的有機標籤。本會發表了一篇研究報告，支持引入特定法例，規管在本港出售有機食物的生產、認證和標籤。

由於有機和非有機食物的售價相差很大，不排除有商販不當地聲稱產品獲有機認證。報告引述一宗二零一零年三月的個案，一名菜檔東主訛稱出售的蔬菜為獲認證的有機蔬菜，被控違反《商品說明條例》，認罪後被判罰款。



報告亦引述香港有機資源中心於同年進行的調查，調查中聲稱售賣有機菜的菜檔，只有約一成(149檔中的14檔)能提供有機產品證明。

選購「有機」或「天然」護膚品須留神

以「有機」或「天然」招徠的護膚產品日漸受歡迎。本會就標榜天然、有機的護膚品進行了研究，提醒消費者須了解產品，作適當的選擇。

本會檢視產品的標籤資料，發現一些標榜有機的產品亦可能含有石油製品和合成防腐劑，而非想像中的天然。此外，某些產品聲稱不含合成香料和著色劑，但這並不代表產品符合了有機標準或成分源自有機種植。

Consumers were advised to choose skincare products with consideration of one's skin type, skin problems, seasonal changes and personal expectation, and bear in mind that natural and organic ingredients can also cause allergic reaction.

Urge to Reduce Packaging and Electronic Waste for Digital Camera

Digital camera has become one of the essential electronic products for many people. The Council joined consumer associations in Europe and published a research report on the eco-design of 20 models of digital cameras. Most of the packaging was considered oversized and the material amounted to about 50% of the total weight.

The weight of the packaging was mainly due to objects other than the camera, such as charger, cable, CD and instruction manual. Manufacturers were urged to reduce packaging and electronic waste by providing a USB cable for charging instead of the traditional charger. Useful tips in protecting the environment were also included in the report.

Environmentally Friendly Refrigerants for Room Air Conditioners

To accelerate the phasing out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs, which is an ozone depleting substance), the Ozone Layer Protection (Products Containing Scheduled Substances) (Import Banning) (Amendment) Regulation had come into effect since 1 January 2010.

While most of the room air conditioners on the market operated with the refrigerant R22 (a typical HCFC), the import of such room air conditioners would be banned in phases under the new regulation. The Council published an article to advise consumers about the impact of the regulation, and to urge consumers to choose room air conditioners with no HCFCs.

Producer Responsibility Scheme for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)

The Council provided views in response to the Waste Management Policy Group of the Environmental Protection Department regarding its consultation on "A New Producer Responsibility Scheme for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment" ("Scheme").



報告建議消費者應按個人膚質、皮膚問題、季節變化和個人期望選擇合適的護膚品。此外，消費者須留意天然及有機成分同樣可能引致皮膚敏感。

減少數碼輕便相機的包裝及電子廢物

數碼輕便相機已經成為很多人的其中一種必需品。本會與歐洲消費者組織合作，刊登了20款數碼輕便相機的「環保設計」的研究及評估結果。結果發現大部分樣本在包裝方面耗用不少物料，佔整件包裝產品重量近幾一半。

除相機本身外，包裝部分包括充電器、電線、光碟及用戶手冊等。建議生產商改用USB充電，代替傳統充電器，有助減少包裝物料及電子廢物。報告亦提供了環保小貼士供消費者參考。

冷氣機環保雪種

為加速逐步淘汰可損耗臭氧層的氟氯烴，《保護臭氧層(含受管制物質產品)(禁止進口)(修訂)規例》由二零一零年一月一日起生效。

市面大部分冷氣機都採用的R22雪種，屬典型的氟氯烴。在新規例下，採用R22雪種的冷氣機會被逐步禁止進口。本會發表了一篇文章提醒消費者有關新規例對消費者的影響，並建議消費者選購採用不含氟氯烴的環保雪種的冷氣機。

We supported the introduction of a new producer responsibility scheme that imposes shared responsibility by various parties towards proper management of WEEE.

As WEEE contain hazardous components, apart from recovery and recycling, measures and targets for reduction of WEEE would be equally important. The Scheme was suggested to review the scope of products to be managed and extend the scope to also address the issue of WEEE reduction.

To ensure efficiency and cost-effectiveness of WEEE management, imposition of monitoring terms in the WEEE management contractor tender would be necessary. All stakeholders in WEEE production should be responsible for some of the costs of the Scheme, with a fair charging method and reasonable fee.

The WEEE system should be subject to overseeing, enforcement and monitoring measures, and that the Government might assist at the initial stage, both financially and technically, for development of the recycling industry in Hong Kong.

Green Housekeeping

At the Consumer Council Office, every endeavour has been made to reduce energy and paper consumption through minimising copying, reusing paper, electronic transfer of information, the use of energy efficient and environmentally friendly office equipment and refraining from the use of materials which are harmful to the environment.

廢電器電子產品

本會就「廢電器電子產品生產者責任計劃(簡稱「計劃」)」的公眾諮詢向環境保護署廢物管理政策組提交意見。

本會支持引入生產者責任制度，要求不同持分者分擔責任，以妥善管理廢電器電子產品產生的問題。

由於廢電器電子產品含有有害物質，除了再造及回收，減少廢電器電子產品的措施及制定有關目標同樣重要。建議計劃定期檢討所涵蓋的廢電器電子產品種類，以及擴大涵蓋範圍，以便有效減少廢電器電子產品。

要確保計劃有效和顧及成本效益，應於廢電器電子產品管理承辦商公開招標文件內加入監察條款。所有持分者都應分擔計劃的成本費用，收費安排必須公平，費用亦必須合理。

計劃制度必須輔以檢視、執行和監察的措施；政府亦應在計劃初段，在財政和技術方面予以協助，以發展香港的環保再造工業。

環保辦公室

為求節省能源及減低紙張的消耗量，本會辦事處盡量減少影印、鼓勵員工雙面用紙、利用電子郵件傳達訊息，及使用慳電及環保的文儀器材，亦避免採用有害環境的物料。