



Government Flying Service Environmental Report 2022

Foreword

This environmental report covers the environmental issues of the Government Flying Service (GFS) in 2022. In this report, we will focus on the key ways we work to help improve the environment and the direct environmental impact of our day-to-day departmental activities.

This report is primarily intended for Hong Kong residents, our various business partners, other government departments, our own staff and other stakeholders. We understand that a single environmental report will probably not be capable of fully satisfying the information needs and interests of such a diverse group. If you feel there are specific areas that the report should include, please let us know and we will try to take into account your views in our future reports.

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1. What We Do

The Government Flying Service (GFS) is a disciplined services department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and its headquarters is located at the south-western corner of the Hong Kong International Airport with a total floor area of around 8,600m². The GFS Kai Tak Division, located at the tip of the ex-Kai Tak Runway next to the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, occupies a gross floor area of around 2,018m², has come into operation from the end of June 2022.

We provide the Hong Kong community with a wide range of flying services, including round-the-clock search and rescue coverage, air ambulance service, fire fighting and support to law enforcement agencies and government departments. We also provide emergency services to the international air carriers within the Hong Kong Flight Information Region and vessels using the shipping lanes within and adjacent to the Hong Kong Maritime Area of Responsibility.

The GFS has an establishment of 335 full-time civil servants as at 31 December 2022 responsible for operations, maintenance and administration. We operate a fleet of twelve aircraft, namely three fixed-wing aeroplanes and nine helicopters to carry out the full range of flying services and support.

In 2022, the GFS flew a total of 6,197 hours. We flew 1,042 hours in support of search and rescue operations with 795 persons rescued, transported 1,517 people to hospital by helicopter and flew 5,294 government officers and official visitors.

2. Our Specific Job

The major tasks of the GFS are to:

- carry out search and rescue both over land and at sea;
- provide emergency air ambulance service;
- support the Hong Kong Police Force and other disciplined services in carrying out their law enforcement duties and training for such duties;
- assist in fighting fires and in responding to any other emergencies which threaten life or property;
- carry out photography for aerial surveys; and
- carry such persons as the Secretary for Security may authorise as passengers.

3. Vision and Strategy on Green Management

The GFS will sustain its efforts to minimise the impact of its activities on the environment and provide the community with safe, efficient and cost-effective emergency and general aviation support services in an environmentally friendly manner.

4. Environmental, Health & Safety Policy

The GFS is committed to conducting operations in compliance with all environmental, health and safety requirements and regulations. The management is entrusted to providing a safe workplace for all our employees and customers.

The managers and supervisors in the GFS have the responsibility to ensure every employee fully understands the safety policies and procedures applicable to his/her work area. The responsibility for safety and environmental practices follows the chain of command and supervisors will be held accountable for subordinate's actions. The supervisors should provide all necessary training and instructions for their staff to perform their duties in an environmentally sound and safe manner. Supervisors will have their own safety and environmental performance included in their performance reviews.

Each employee has the responsibility to comply with the GFS work rules, and follow safe work practices and procedures established to protect the environment and the staff. All employees are asked to report to their supervisor all unsafe acts, hazardous conditions, and conditions which impact, or have the potential to impact the environment.

The Controller, Government Flying Service is personally committed to the continual improvement of our environmental, health and safety performance and will authorise actions necessary to achieve these objectives.

The Government Flying Service Environmental, Health and Safety Committee, chaired by the Chief Pilot (Corporate Safety), oversees the environmental, health and safety policy and goals of the department. It is also responsible for addressing certain topics, including but not limited to waste reduction, accident prevention and training programmes.

The total Greenhouse Gas emissions for the year 2022 was 2,095.65 tonnes of CO₂ -e.

In 2022, the Committee continued to promote occupational safety and health as well as environmental protection.

5. Green Personnel

The Controller, Government Flying Service has appointed an officer as the Green Manager responsible for overseeing the environmental issues of the department. The Green Manager is assisted by the Green Task Force and Energy Wardens in implementing the GFS's Green Policy.

Green Manager

Aircraft Engineer (Airframe/Engine)¹² is the Green Manager of the GFS with the following responsibilities:

- (a) implementing a programme of green housekeeping within the department;
- (b) introducing measures to increase staff awareness and involvement in relation to environmental issues; and
- (c) publicising the commitment to protecting the environment, formulating action plans and recording achievements.

He provides a focal point for introducing, sustaining, reviewing and strengthening all environmental initiatives/activities. He is assisted by the Assistant Departmental Secretary in carrying out these duties.

Green Task Force

The GFS set up the Green Task Force in February 2003 with the main focus on energy conservation. The Green Task Force comprises representatives from the Operations, Engineering, Corporate Safety and Administration Divisions. They are responsible for liaising with staff members to explore possible options for saving energy without affecting the GFS operations and also discussing with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department on how to make the proposals and ideas into effective measures.

6. *Our Environmental Concerns and Initiatives*

6.1 *Aircraft Noise*

The GFS is very much concerned with the noise generated by our aircraft. Due to the nature of our flying services, such as casualty evacuation and support of law and order, it is not always possible to avoid flights where the noise may affect the public. Nevertheless, we have always been conscious of the need to conserve the environment and have taken various measures to protect the environment and minimise the noise nuisance caused to the public. Our measures include -

- (a) Higher transit height through the Harbour
Unless due to weather limitations or when there is an operational requirement, our helicopters will fly at 1,000 feet or above in the Harbour to reduce the noise caused to the public.
- (b) Winding down of helicopter rotors
If a prolonged waiting time is expected, especially at a helipad in the urban area (e.g. Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital rooftop), the helicopter rotors would be wound down to reduce the noise caused to the residents nearby. This can also help saving fuel.
- (c) Flight scheduling
Different tasks are combined into one flight as far as possible to reduce the total flight time and fuel consumption. Also, training flights are conducted at remote areas whenever possible, and night flights are scheduled to start and finish early after sunset in order to minimise the disturbance to the general public.
- (d) Selection of holding points
Specific holding points away from noise sensitive areas are identified in case passengers are delayed.
- (e) Lower noise helicopter H175 introduced
The five-bladed main rotor and three-bladed tail rotor have new-generation blade profiles and tips. These offer a reduction in vibration and noise.

6.2 Chemical Substances

The common chemical substances used in the GFS for the maintenance of our fleet are cleaning solvent, aviation fuel, lubrication oil, grease and paint. These chemical substances are used on a daily basis. The waste substances are disposed of through licensed waste collectors approved by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD).

For flight safety purpose, we conduct fuel sample checks for each storage tank and each aircraft daily. In the past, we disposed of these fuel samples. To reduce the amount of chemical wastes, we have filtered the fuel samples and re-used it for other purposes since 2005. In 2022, 1,000 litres of spent lubrication oil was disposed of. No spent aviation fuel and no non-halo solvent were disposed of.

We have exerted continuous efforts for years to control the generation of time-expired paint at a low level. We have tried to use some of the aircraft paint waste for ground equipment maintenance with the aim of reducing the waste. In 2022, no time expired paint was disposed of.

We remind our staff regularly of the importance of the effective use of chemical and solvent in maintenance activities so as to minimise the amount of chemical wastes.

6.3 Working with Other Government Departments in Environmental Protection

The GFS works closely with other government departments in environmental protection. For example, our helicopters assist the Marine Department in conducting surveillance of floating refuse and oil pollution in Hong Kong waters. We also help in spraying oil dispersant over the sea when required.

Our helicopters also assist the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department in conducting a “Sky-shout” publicity exercise on hill fire prevention. On Sundays and public holidays (particularly Chung Yeung Festival and Ching Ming Festival), our helicopters help disseminate the message of preventing hill fires to the public by flying above the countryside and playing pre-recorded voice messages through the loudhailers.



Helicopter in fire-fighting operations

In addition, our aircraft carry officers of the EPD to take aerial photographs of power stations and their surrounding environment for studies and analyses. We also assist the EPD to conduct aerial inspections, surveys and monitoring of upper-air quality in the atmosphere and river catchments of Deep Bay and Mirs Bay on the spreading of wastewater plumes from major sewage outfalls. Our aircraft are also used to take aerial photographs for conducting site inspections and surveys of existing waste facilities such as landfills and transfer stations as well as planning of special waste projects in Hong Kong.

6.4 Energy Use and Energy Saving Measures

The GFS is highly concerned about energy conservation and is constantly looking out for opportunities and the latest products that can bring about savings in energy or electricity consumption.

The electricity consumption remained stable in 2022 under the better monitoring through the upgraded Central Control and Monitoring System for electricity saving.

It was the Government's target to achieve a 6% saving on the total electricity consumption in government buildings from 2020-21 to 2024-25 under comparable operating conditions using 2018-19 as the baseline. To reduce energy consumption, we are adopting the following green housekeeping measures -

- setting all photocopiers to energy saving mode when they are not in use for over 15 minutes;
- setting the room temperature at 25.5°C;
- limited operation of the passenger lift;
- installing venetian blinds/solar films at the windows which are exposed to direct sunlight;
- using occupancy sensors, zoned lighting and switches;
- using energy-efficient fluorescent tubes in office and LED light bulbs in hangar; and
- switching off lights, air-conditioning, computers and electrical equipment not in use.

The above measures are by no means exhaustive. We will continue to strive for energy saving.



Setting room temperature at 25.5°C



Venetian blinds at the Conference Room



Zoned lighting



Occupancy sensors

6.5 *Paper Consumption*

In 2022, 2,133 reams of paper and 2,150 nos. of envelope were consumed. On the other hand, about 3,075 kg of waste paper was collected for recycling in 2022, thus avoiding about 15 tonnes of greenhouse gas emission. We will continue to closely monitor the use of paper and envelope and to minimise paper consumption by the following measures –

- using electronic communication;
- printing on both sides of paper;
- using the blank side of used paper for drafting or printing;
- minimising photocopies by circulating circulars/documents by emails or using the old sets of documents for re-circulation and reviewing distribution lists;
- sharing reference materials on the local area network;
- re-using paper, envelopes and file jackets;
- using e-cards during festival seasons; and
- placing boxes next to photocopiers to collect used paper, outdated newspaper and publications for recycling.

6.6 *Other Green Housekeeping Measures*

The green housekeeping measures initiated/continued in 2022 can be broadly grouped into the following categories:

- using environmentally friendly lighting facilities (LED lights at the rear exits), electrical appliances, stationery, office equipment and sundries items (e.g. bio-degradable plastic rubbish bags and rechargeable batteries);
- using water purifiers to provide drinking water in the office in order to reduce the use of bottled water;
- using plumbing appurtenance (e.g. water taps, urinals and shower heads) with water saving devices;
- collecting recyclable materials (e.g. paper, aluminum cans, plastic bottles and toner cartridges);
- adopting green procurement (e.g. purchase of photocopiers and printers with double-sided copying/printing function; electrical appliances with energy saving functions and/or with greater energy efficiency);
- adjusting the operation hours of Air Handling Units for the canteen and the engineering workshops;
- installing a timer to control the operation hours of the exhaust fan of the canteen kitchen;
- collecting food wastes;
- regular cleansing of the filters of the air ventilation system and carpet; and
- participating in environmental protection activities such as the Airport Community-wide Carbon Audit, Hong Kong International Airport Carbon Reduction Campaign, Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign, etc.



Rechargeable batteries and charger



Plumbing appurtenance with water saving devices



Water purifier



Poster in the prominent position of the Canteen to encourage colleagues to reduce food waste

7. Aims for 2023

We will continue to encourage and remind our staff to practise and implement the various measures/programmes initiated/continued in 2022 to help protect the environment. Our targets in 2023 are:

- to review the effectiveness of existing measures and to identify new initiatives to reduce resources consumption; and
- to continue to promote good housekeeping practices for energy saving and to educate our staff on the awareness and importance of environmental protection.

We will continue to monitor progress in the above areas and to foster a green culture in the department.

8. Information and Suggestions

For further information or any suggestions, you may contact the Departmental Secretary of the GFS through:

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