



Municipal solid waste and paper recycling

Figure 1 – Annual amount of solid waste disposed of at landfills

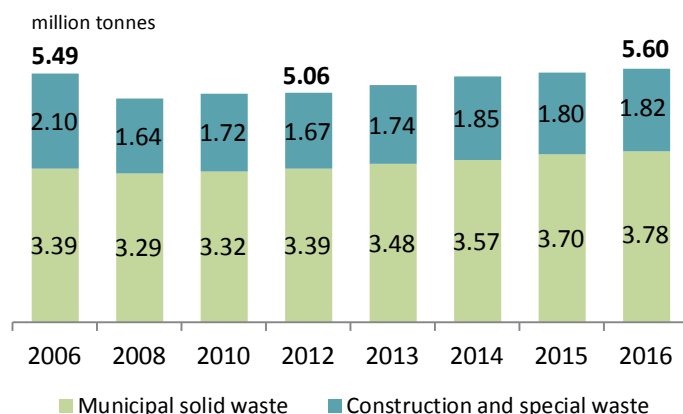


Figure 2 – Sources of municipal solid waste disposal in 2006 and 2016

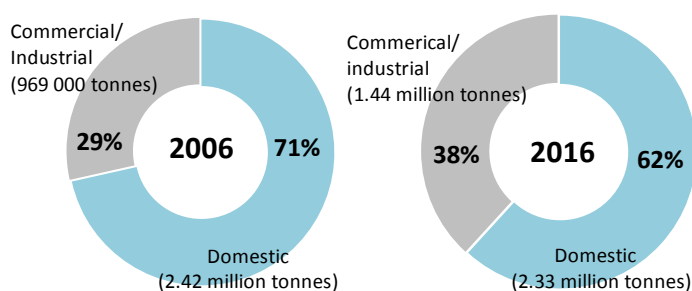
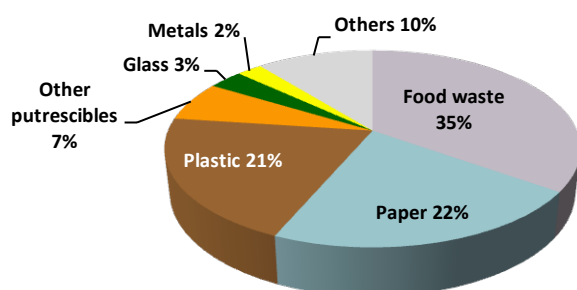


Figure 3 – Composition of municipal solid waste disposed of at landfills in 2016



	Food waste	Paper	Plastics	Metals	Others*
Million tonnes	1.31	0.82	0.78	0.08	0.78

Note: (*) Others include glass, other (non-food) putrescibles, textiles, wood, etc.

Highlights

- Solid waste disposal is one of the key challenges of waste management in Hong Kong. During 2012-2016, the total amount of solid waste disposed of at landfills has rebounded significantly by 11% to 5.6 million tonnes in 2016, after an 8% decline in the preceding six years. This also outpaced the 2.6% population growth during 2012-2016 (**Figure 1**).
- About 68% of the waste was municipal solid waste (i.e. waste from domestic, commercial and industrial sectors), which has gone up by 12% during 2012-2016. As regards the remaining 32% of the waste, they were mainly construction waste which have rebounded noticeably by 9% during 2012-2016, arresting the 20% decline in the preceding six years and despite the implementation of construction waste charging since 2006 (**Figure 1**). Conceivably, this rebound may be partly related to increased construction activities in Hong Kong recent years.
- Households were the largest generator of municipal solid waste, accounting for 62% of the total in 2016, while the remaining 38% was generated by commercial and industrial sources (**Figure 2**). To reduce municipal solid waste, the Government is planning to introduce mandatory municipal solid waste charging in 2019.
- Analyzed by type, food waste made up the largest part of municipal solid waste, accounting for 35% of the total. This was followed by paper (22%), plastics (21%), other putrescibles (7%) and glass (3%) (**Figure 3**).

Municipal solid waste and paper recycling (cont'd)

Figure 4 — Waste paper disposed of at landfills

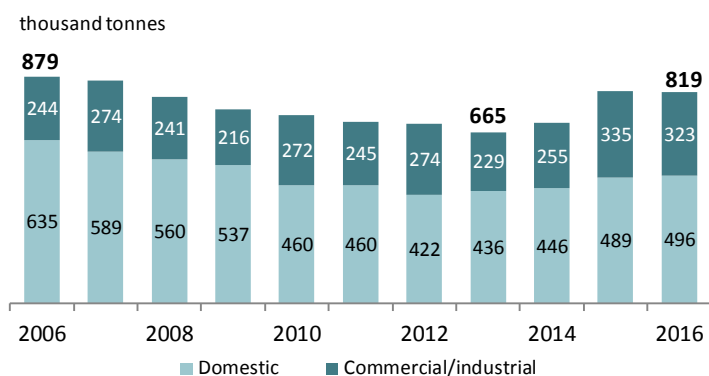


Figure 5 — Types of waste paper disposed of at landfills

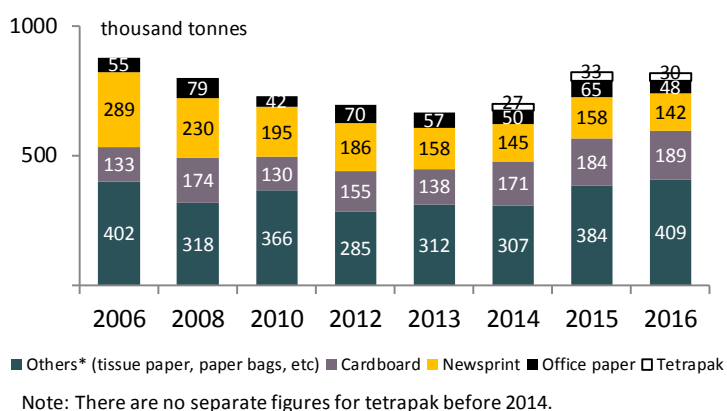
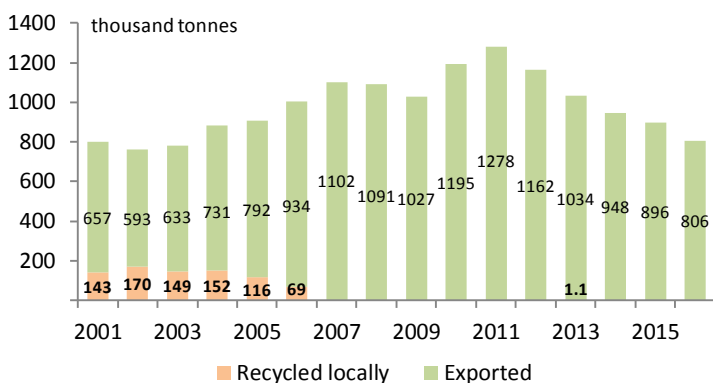


Figure 6 — Annual amount of waste paper for export or for local recycling



Highlights

- Focusing on waste paper disposal, it had fallen steadily by a total of 24% during 2006-2013, but rebounded noticeably by 23% to 819 000 tonnes in the more recent years up to 2016. This rebound was mainly driven by a 41% rise in disposal by the businesses, compared to a 14% rise by households (**Figure 4**).
- There was a significant change in the composition of waste paper disposed at landfills during 2006-2016. Newsprint waste plunged by a total of 51% within a decade, partly reflecting a shift of newspaper reading habits towards online platforms. By contrast, the amount of cardboard waste rose by a total of 42%, suggesting an unabated use of paper in goods packaging (**Figure 5**).
- Apart from discarding waste paper at landfills, some waste paper generated in Hong Kong is collected for export to other places (mainly the Mainland) for recycling. This amounted to 806 000 tonnes in 2016 (**Figure 6**). Local recycling used to account for 7% of overall paper recycling in 2006, but its share fell to none after the last local paper recycling factory closed in 2006.
- As the Mainland has tightened up waste import more recently, the Government has invited interested recyclers in March this year to bid for the lease of a site in Eco Park for setting up a paper recycling facility for locally collected waste paper.

Data source: Latest figures from Environmental Protection Department.

Research Office
Information Services Division
Legislative Council Secretariat
16 April 2018
Tel: 2871 2127

Statistical Highlights are compiled for Members and Committees of the Legislative Council. They are not legal or other professional advice and shall not be relied on as such. Statistical Highlights are subject to copyright owned by The Legislative Council Commission (The Commission). The Commission permits accurate reproduction of Statistical Highlights for non-commercial use in a manner not adversely affecting the Legislative Council, provided that acknowledgement is made stating the Research Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat as the source and one copy of the reproduction is sent to the Legislative Council Library. The paper number of this issue of Statistical Highlights is ISSH19/17-18.