

**HEAVY METALS IN KUALA LUMPUR  
MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE**

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**DEDICATION**

*Dedicated to my beloved father, mother,  
brothers and sisters and friends....*

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## ABSTRAK

Dengan mengambilkira kebaikan sistem penunuan sisa perbandaran dari Kuala Lumpur, jika dibandingkan dengan sistem pelupusan yang lain, analisa logam berat, iaitu salah satu parameter penting telah dijalankan. Analisa secara terus daripada sampel sisa menggunakan alat "*Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer*" atau AAS selama setahun, bermula July 2001 hingga Jun 2002. Hasil daripada projek ini, didapati purata kandungan kering logam berat adalah seperti berikut : kadmium (Cd): 5.9 g/tan. kromium (Cr): 46.7 g/tan., raksa (Hg): 3.7 g/tan., plumbum (Pb): 111.1 g/tan, dan arsenik (As): 3.4 g/tan. Dijangkakan sekiranya sisa perbandaran ini diproses dengan sistem penunuan (*incinerator*), pelepasan logam berat selepas proses rawatan adalah dibawah tahap yang ditetapkan.

## ABSTRACT

Considering the advantages of Municipal Solid Waste Incineration over other alternatives for MSW generated by the residents of Kuala Lumpur, a study was carried out to determine the loads of heavy metals in the MSW. Direct determination from collected MSW samples was carried out using Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer. In this project, arsenic, cadmium, lead, chromium and mercury were determined by AAS for the period of one year, beginning from July 2001 until June 2002. As the result, average heavy metal loads, in g per ton refuse (dry basis) are: Cd: 5.9 g/ton. Cr: 46.7 g/ton., Hg: 3.7 g/ton., Pb:111.1 g/ton, and As : 3.4 g/ton. The heavy metals emission for MSW incineration is expected to be lower than the referred standards for this project.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
	TITLE	i
	DECLARATION	ii
	DEDICATION	iii
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
	ABSTRAK	v
	ABSTRACT	vi
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
	LIST OF TABLES	xii
	LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
	NOMENCLATURE	xvi
<b>I</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Problem Statement	3
1.3	Objectives	4
1.4	Scope of Study	4

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>LITERATURE STUDY</b>	
2.1	Municipal Solid Waste Generation in Malaysia	5
2.2	Common Sources of Heavy Metal in MSW and Disposal	7
2.3	Landfills	8
2.4	Heavy Metals in Compost Produced from MSW	10
2.5	Heavy Metal General Properties	12
	2.5.1 Arsenic	13
	2.5.2 Cadmium	13
	2.5.3 Chromium	14
	2.5.4 Mercury	15
	2.5.5 Lead	17
2.6	Biochemical Properties of Heavy Metals	18
2.7	Methylation of Heavy Metals in the Environment	18
2.8	Heavy Metal Content in Domestic Refuse	19
2.9	Heavy Metal and Solid Waste Disposal	22
2.10	Incineration	23
2.11	Influence of Incineration Operating Condition on the Formation of Heavy Metal Compound	27
2.12	Heavy Metal Partitioning According to the Background Chlorine Concentration	29
2.13	Health Effect of Heavy Metals	30
2.14	Effect of Sampling on Heavy Metal Data Accuracy	32
2.15	Comparison of MSW Composition by Analysis of Incineration Product and Direct Waste Analysis	33

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>III</b>	<b>MATERIALS AND METHODS</b>	<b>35</b>
3.1	Sampling Method at Landfill Site	36
3.1.1	Sampling Method	38
3.2	Sample Preparation in the Laboratory	40
3.2.1	Drying	40
3.2.2	Shredding	40
3.2.3	Grinding	42
3.3	Heavy Metal Analysis	44
3.3.1	Heavy Metal and Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer	44
3.3.2	MSW Acid Digestion Procedure	45
3.3.3	ASTM E 926-94 : Nitric-Sulphuric-Hydrochloric Acid Digestion (Practice B)	45
3.3.4	Reagents and Equipments	46
3.3.5	Hazards	47
<b>IV</b>	<b>RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	
4.1	Heavy Metal Concentration in K.L MSW	48
4.1.1	Heavy Metal in Random Composite Samples	50
4.1.2	Heavy Metal in Industrial Sources during Weekdays	51
4.1.3	Heavy Metal in Industrial Sources during Weekends	52
4.1.4	Heavy Metal in Commercial Sources during Weekdays	53



<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>PAGE</b> <sup>x</sup>
	4.1.5 Heavy Metal in Commercial Sources during Weekends	54
	4.1.6 Heavy Metal in Medium Income Sources during Weekdays	55
	4.1.7 Heavy Metal in Medium Income Sources during Weekends	56
	4.1.8 Heavy Metal in Low Income Sources	57
	4.1.9 Heavy Metal in High Income Sources	58
	4.1.10 Overall Observation	59
4.2	Comparison Between the Average Heavy Metal Concentration from Kuala Lumpur MSW and Previous Studies	61
4.3	Effect of Moisture on Heavy Metal Concentration	64
4.4	Expected Kuala Lumpur MSW Heavy Metal Emission if Incinerated	65
4.5	Compliance With The Malaysian Environmental Quality Act, 1974 (Environmental Quality (Clean Air) Regulations, 1978)	68
4.6	The Effect of Seasonal, Festivals and Special Events	73
<b>IV</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	
5.1	Conclusions	74
5.2	Recommendations	75

<b>CHAPTER</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
	REFERENCES	76
Appendix A	Calculations	81
Appendix B	Heavy Metal Analysis Data	88
Appendix C	Site-Sampling Photographs	93
Appendix D	Standard Practices for Preparing Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF)	98

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Common sources of heavy metals in MSW	8
2.2	Heavy metals composition in leachates from 15 landfills in UK	9
2.3	Concentrations variation of common heavy metals in landfill leachates at different age	10
2.4	Heavy metal content for general-use compost from MSW	11
2.5	Heavy metal content in general-use compost from yard waste	11
2.6	Primary production of metals and global emissions to soil ( $10^3$ /yr)	12
2.7	Distribution of heavy metals from a gas scrubbing stage and washed bottom ash. All loads are in g/ton	19
2.8	Comparison of refuse heavy metals from various plants in Germany and Switzerland	20
2.9	Heavy metals data in refuse reported by various researchers	21
2.10	Heavy Metals Emission Standards for incinerators by EC Directive Emission (89/369EC) and HMIP Standards (IPR5/3)	24

<b>TABLE NO.</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
2.11	Documented Heavy Metal Related Diseases	31
2.12	Composition of municipal solid wastes determined by the analysis of incineration products (by totalling the elements concentration in the slag, ESP dust and flue gas)	34
2.13	Composition of municipal solid wastes determined by direct waste analysis (input based)	34
3.1	Sampling categories	37
4.1	Average heavy metals from all sources in MSW samples, all in g/ton refuse	60
4.2	Comparison between heavy metals data reported by various researchers and MSW from Kuala Lumpur (g/ton refuse)	63
4.3	The overall heavy metal assuming commercial and industrial contributed one third of total MSW	64
4.4	Partitioning of heavy metals during incineration done by various researchers	66
4.5	Expected partitioning of heavy metals during incineration for Kuala Lumpur MSW in uncontrolled condition (without APCS)	67
4.6	Heavy Metal Emission Limits for MSW Combustion	69
4.7	The removal efficiency and emission factors for mass burn and modular excess air combustors	70
4.8	Estimated efficiency for selected system (mercury removal)	72

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE NO.	TITLE	PAGE
2.1	Waste generations in selected major towns	6
2.2	Mercury mass balance in waste incineration	26
2.3	Cadmium mass balance in waste incineration	27
3.1	Collected random composite samples.	39
3.2	Sampling process for MSW at the landfill site	39
3.3	Sample dryer model Memmert ULM 800	40
3.4	Shredder model Adler Santini HS2510Y	41
3.5	Shredded samples	41
3.6	Grinder model Thomas Scientific 5KH30QN977	42
3.7	Fine ground sample	42
3.8	Sample preparation procedure prior analyses	43
3.9	Wet digestion	46
3.10	Filtered sample solution prior analysis using AAS	46
3.11	Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer model GBC 3000, (Analytical Chemistry Research Laboratory, Faculty of Science, UTM)	47
4.1	Heavy metal concentration in random composite samples (dry basis)	50
4.2	Heavy metal concentration in industrial sources during weekdays (dry basis)	51

4.3	Heavy metal concentration in industrial sources during weekend (dry basis)	52
4.4	Heavy metal concentration in commercial sources during weekdays (dry basis)	53
4.5	Heavy metal concentration in commercial sources during weekend (dry basis)	54
4.6	Heavy metal concentration in residential medium income sources during weekdays (dry basis)	55
4.7	Heavy metal concentration in residential medium income sources during weekend (dry basis)	56
4.8	Heavy metal concentration in residential low income sources (dry basis)	57
4.9	Heavy metal concentration in residential high income sources (dry basis)	58

**NOMENCLATURE**

As	-	Arsenic
APCS	-	Air Pollution Control System
Pb	-	Lead
Cr	-	Chromium
Cd	-	Cadmium
C	-	Carbon
Cl	-	Chlorine
Zn	-	Zinc
Cu	-	Copper
Ni	-	Nickel
S	-	Sulphur
Sb	-	Antimony
F	-	Fluorine
Hg	-	Mercury
Fe	-	Iron
MSW	-	Municipal Solid Waste
ICP	-	Inductive Coupled Plasma
AAS	-	Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer
$\mu\text{g}/\text{ton}$	-	microgram per ton
$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	-	microgram per cubic meter
RDF	-	Refuse Derived Fuel
APCS	-	Air Pollution Control System

ESP	-	Electrostatic Precipitator
DSI/ESP	-	Duct Sorbent Injection/Fabric Filter
SD/ESP	-	Spray Dryer/ Electrostatic Precipitator
DSI/FF	-	Duct Sorbent Injection/ Fabric Filter
SD/FF	-	Spray Dryer/ Fabric Filter



## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Solid wastes, comprising of all the wastes of human and animal activities, are discharged as something useless or unwanted. In the early days, the disposal of human and other wastes did not pose a significant problem as the population was small and the amount of land for the assimilation of waste was large (Tchobanoglous and Theisen, 1993).

As the population grows rapidly, along with the technological and industrial advances in the recent years, the chemical composition of municipal solid waste (MSW) in the country has also become more complex. This includes the presence of various toxic heavy metals. Considerable amount of toxic heavy metals that may create potential adverse effects on human, crops and animals, have been a great concern to both regulatory bodies and environmental activist in the recent years. Due to this reason, the availability of good heavy metal data in local MSW is important.

Determination of heavy metals content in local MSW, namely arsenic, cadmium, mercury, lead and chromium was carried out in this study for a period of one year from July 2001 to June 2002. By using the heavy metal data, estimation has been made on metal emission which was done to predict its compliance with given local standards. The samples were collected from Selayang landfill site, which caters the MSW from Kuala Lumpur.

The five toxic heavy metals which are commonly associated with adverse effects on human, animals and plants, have been a great concern to both regulatory agencies and public. The increasing level of bioaccumulation in the environment particularly in the food chain of these toxic metals pose potential risks to human health and the difficulty to limit mercury emission from anthropogenic sources due to the high volatility of mercury species have drawn special attention (Scala, 2001). These elements, contrary to other pollutants, are non biodegradable and undergo global ecological cycle (Shende *et al.*, 1992). Olie, *et al.* (1997) reported that heavy metals could also act as catalyst in the formation of polychlorinated dibenzo-*p*-dioxins (PCDD's) and polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDF's) in MSW incineration process.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW) is a continuing issue facing our society, has come to a crossroads. Limited landfill sites and increasing disposal costs have hasten the effort to adopt incineration technologies and energy recoveries (Wang *et al.*, 2001). In Malaysia, the proposed incineration plant, located 5 km from Broga, Selangor will be the first municipal solid waste incineration plant in the country. More MSW thermal plants are expected to be built in the country in the future, as a part of the integrated municipal solid waste management. This is in line with the government's plan to phase-out the existing conventional method.

Unfortunately, since the technology is new, there are a lot of technical data needed as reference according to the local condition. Technical data such as proximate and ultimate analysis, waste composition, characterization and heavy metal analysis are some of the essential in MSW incineration plant design.

The need to know heavy metal concentration in MSW is important for engineers to design an incinerator plant, especially the air pollution control system (APCS). The design of air pollution control system for incinerators in MSW management must have reliable heavy metal data. Such data can be used to estimate the cost and efficiency of the desired air pollution system to remove the heavy metals from the flue gas. By having such data also will help air pollution specialist to evaluate the heavy metal contamination level of the ambient air quality in the affected area by using an air dispersion modelling. Water quality specialist can use the compiled data as reference in the case of underground and surface water pollution.

However, in this project, the focus is on the estimation of heavy metal emission based on the data obtained and calculation was made by using emission factors used by the USEPA. The final estimation will be compared to the local emission standards. Stringent emission standards on MSW incineration are expected in the future.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To quantify the amount of heavy metals in the MSW.
- ii. To study the effect of the source of MSW on heavy metal concentration.
- iii. To study the seasonal influence on the heavy metal concentration throughout the year.
- iv. To estimate and evaluate the emission of heavy metals if the MSW is incinerated.

### **1.4 Scope of Study**

This study covers the analysis of heavy metal content in 15 composite samples characterised base on MSW collection route and activities. Sampling was carried out for 7 days in each month, beginning on July 2001 until Jun 2002. Samples were digested using wet digestion method (ASTM E 926-94). Analysis of heavy metal were carried out using Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy (AAS). By using the data obtained, the next step was to estimate the emission of each heavy metal passing through the air pollution control (APCS) and to compare with the given guideline for incineration of MSW. Concluding remarks are proposed based on the findings of this project.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

- i. The analysis of heavy metals in this project only involves composite samples, not individual samples (plastics, food, paper, yard waste, etc.) and therefore the actual sources are not fully understood. Further investigation can be carried out on actual heavy metals sources in local condition.
  
- ii. Further investigation can be made on heavy metal loads made after waste recovery and recycling. The major intention was to carry out recovery and recycling before incineration once the plant operates.

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