

April's monthly ovitrap index for Aedes albopictus rises

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (May 29) announced that the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for April rose to 1 per cent from 0.1 per cent in March, indicating that the infestation of *Aedes albopictus* in the areas surveyed was not extensive. Nevertheless, the FEHD reminded the public to carry out effective prevention and control measures against mosquitoes as the summer weather is favourable for mosquito breeding within a short period of time.

Among the 52 areas surveyed, positive ovitrap indices were recorded in 15 areas, ranging from 1.5 per cent to 9.8 per cent, with the highest in Tseung Kwan O North. As for the port areas, the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for April rose to 0.1 per cent from zero in March.

"*Aedes albopictus* is a kind of mosquito that can transmit dengue fever (DF) and Zika virus. In view of the fact that Hong Kong recorded a confirmed local DF case, five local Japanese encephalitis (JE) cases and one imported case of Zika Virus Infection last year and DF is still highly prevalent in neighbouring areas, and that with the advent of summer, the hot and rainy weather is favourable for proliferation of mosquitoes, the community must work with the Government to continue to carry out effective mosquito control measures," an FEHD spokesman said.

"The FEHD and relevant government departments will continue to intensify their mosquito prevention and control work covering areas under their purview, and strengthen publicity and education campaigns. The FEHD will conduct a three-phase Anti-mosquito Campaign this year. The second phase of the territory-wide campaign, lasting for 10 weeks, was launched on April 23 and will end on June 29. During this period, mosquito prevention and control work is being enhanced by the FEHD and relevant government departments. The district offices of the FEHD have targeted areas which have drawn particular concern, such as public markets, cooked food centres and hawker bazaars, single-block buildings, streets and back lanes, common parts of buildings, village houses, construction sites, vacant sites and road works sites, and intensified mosquito prevention and control work at those places. The FEHD will, immediately after each phase of the campaign, conduct special territory-wide thematic mosquito prevention and control operations so as to enhance the effectiveness of the campaign," he added.

The spokesman said that the FEHD had set up four Pest Control Inspection Teams in May last year to step up inspection of construction sites and enforcement action against mosquito breeding. This year (as at May 11), the FEHD had instituted 34 prosecutions for mosquito breeding found in relevant premises under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), with all cases involving construction sites.

As *Aedes albopictus* breeds in small water bodies, the spokesman reminded members of the public to inspect their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, scrub vases and pot plant saucers at least once a week, properly dispose of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes, and drill large holes in unused tyres. He also advised the public and estate management bodies to keep drains free of blockage and fill up all depressions to prevent puddles from forming. They should also scrub all drains and surface sewers with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any mosquito eggs.

In addition, rural areas and the vicinity of shrubby areas are the natural habitats for mosquitoes, other insects and animals. Members of the public living in rural areas may install mosquito screens on windows and doors if necessary. Those staying in the natural environment should follow appropriate personal protective measures against mosquitoes, such as avoiding staying in the vicinity of shrubby areas for a long time, wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and applying DEET-containing insect repellent. Members of the public are reminded to make reports to the government departments via 1823 if mosquito problems are detected.

The spokesman reiterated that effective mosquito control requires the sustained effort of all parties concerned. The community must work together with the Government to carry out effective mosquito control measures.

The ovitrap index is divided into four levels, reflecting the infestation level of *Aedes albopictus*. Level 1 (< 5 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito is not extensive in the area surveyed. Level 2 (5 per cent – < 20 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito is slightly more extensive in the area surveyed. Level 3 (20 per cent – < 40 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito exceeds one-fifth of the area surveyed. Level 4 (\geq 40 per cent) indicates that almost half of the surveyed area is infested with the mosquito. The Government will step up the scale of anti-mosquito operations according to the level of infestation as well as reports from front-line staff and the public.

As *Aedes albopictus* can transmit DF and Zika virus, oviposition traps are set in 52 areas in Hong Kong for monitoring the breeding of *Aedes albopictus*, which is only one of the mosquito species commonly found in Hong Kong and is active only in the daytime. The index does not capture the activity of *Aedes albopictus* outside the 52 areas and it also does not measure the prevalence of other kinds of mosquitoes.

The ovitrap indices for *Aedes albopictus* in different areas and information on mosquito prevention and control measures are available on the department website at www.fehd.gov.hk.

Recycling sites in North District and Yuen Long in New Territories convicted for illegal collection and handling of hazardous electronic waste

Two recycling sites and a responsible person of another recycling site were convicted for illegal collection, storage and handling of hazardous electronic waste (e-waste), which is classified as chemical waste. They were fined a total of \$92,500 at Fanling Magistrates' Courts on May 15 and today (May 29) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation.

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) continues to combat illegal handling of hazardous e-waste at recycling sites. EPD staff conducted blitz inspections between last July and October at three open recycling sites in North District, Shan Ha Tsuen and Kung Um Road in Yuen Long in the New Territories. Some 30 bags of waste printed circuit boards (PCBs), which are classified as chemical waste, were found, weighing about 9 tonnes and with a total market value of approximately \$0.9 million. Upon in-depth investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecutions against the operating companies and responsible persons of these recycling sites.

The EPD spokesman said, "One of the defendants denied his role as a responsible person of the recycling site. After the court hearing, that defendant was convicted as an on-site responsible person who possesses the chemical waste concerned." The operators and responsible persons of recycling sites should ensure that the collection, storage and handling of chemical wastes at recycling sites comply with the law, otherwise they might be prosecuted, the spokesman added.

The spokesman said that dismantled or destroyed PCBs, LCD monitors and cathode ray tubes are hazardous e-waste, containing heavy metals and other toxic substances. They are classified as chemical waste and are regulated under the existing laws on chemical waste disposal. To protect the environment, the EPD is committed to combating the illegal collection, storage and handling of hazardous e-waste by recycling sites, and strictly controls the illegal import and export activities of hazardous waste.

The EPD reminded the operators of recycling sites to strictly comply with the relevant controls on chemical waste. They should register with the EPD in accordance with the law if they produce chemical waste. Chemical waste must be properly packaged, labelled and stored, as well as collected by licensed chemical waste collectors for delivery to licensed chemical waste disposal facilities for disposal. First-time offenders of the above legislations are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. For subsequent offences, offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.

Members of the public may visit the EPD's website for more information about the control of chemical waste:

www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html.

[Effective Exchange Rate Index](#)

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, May 29, 2018 is 100 (up 0.3 against yesterday's index).

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (May 28) seized about 850 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$2.3 million and a duty potential of about \$1.6 million at Shenzhen Bay Control Point.

Customs officers intercepted an incoming truck declared as carrying assorted goods at Shenzhen Bay Control Point yesterday. After inspection, the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes was found concealed in 64 carton boxes under four sets of machinery.

The 37-year-old male driver was arrested and the truck was detained. Investigation is ongoing.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Restaurant at Kam Tin Yuen Long convicted for excessive wastewater discharge

Wealth Banquet, a restaurant at Kam Tin Main Road in Yuen Long, discharged sub-standard wastewater into nearby drains and violated the requirements of the wastewater discharge licence. The restaurant was fined \$10,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (May 29) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO).

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) enforcement officers conducted a blitz inspection at Kam Tin Yuen Long last October and found that turbid wastewater was being discharged from the grease trap of the aforementioned restaurant. It was suspected that the wastewater had not been properly treated before being discharging into the communal drain. The EPD officers then collected wastewater samples for analysis and the results showed that the oil and grease, suspended solids and biochemical oxygen demand in the wastewater exceeded the wastewater discharge licence limits by two to four times. After evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecution against the licensee in accordance with the WPCO.

The EPD spokesman said that the location concerned is an unsewered area. Anyone who discharges sub-standard wastewater into a communal drain will pollute nearby waterways and adversely affect the environment and public hygiene. The spokesman reminded the responsible persons of restaurants that they must properly repair and maintain wastewater treatment facilities and strictly adhere to the discharge standards as stipulated in the licence to prevent environmental pollution.

Under the WPCO, anyone who discharges wastewater which exceeds the standards of the discharge licence into a communal drain commits an offence. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment.