

FEHD releases Rodent Infestation Rate for 2018

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (March 6) that the overall Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) for 2018 was 3.4 per cent, slightly lower than the figure recorded in 2017 (3.5 per cent). Rodent infestation in public areas in the territory was generally stable.

An FEHD spokesman said, "Rodent infestation was not extensive in the areas surveyed as the overall RIRs of all districts were below 10 per cent for 2018.

"In view of relatively high RIRs in individual districts for the second half of 2018, such as Kowloon City District (11.1 per cent), apart from regular anti-rodent work, the FEHD has also enhanced rodent prevention and control measures, including filling up holes and cracks on floor surfaces, adjusting the location of baiting points and rodent traps, providing advice on rodent prevention and control to property management companies of private buildings, and arranging health talks and promotional activities, in areas where rodent activity was detected during the survey period."

There is no internationally adopted RIR. When devising the RIR, the FEHD made reference to overseas practices and the actual situation of Hong Kong. The overall RIR is the average infestation rate of the districts during the period. The district RIR assesses the distribution of the rodent problem in public places covered during the surveillance period. The district RIR is divided into three levels. Level 1 (less than 10 per cent) indicates that rodent infestation is not extensive in the area surveyed. Level 2 (between 10 per cent and 19 per cent) indicates that rodent infestation is slightly extensive in the area surveyed, and the FEHD will strengthen rodent disinfestation operations there. Level 3 (20 per cent or above) indicates that rodent infestation is extensive. The relevant government departments will form a joint task force and launch special rodent prevention and control operations to strengthen rodent disinfestation, environmental improvement and cleaning services comprehensively, and promote messages of rodent prevention and control in the community.

The spokesman added, "The district RIRs may not fully reflect the actual situation of rodent infestation in the individual locations of the district. When conducting rodent prevention and control operations, the FEHD makes appropriate adjustments to the work in individual districts from time to time, taking into account reports from front-line staff and the views of the relevant District Councils and the local community, as well as the district RIR."

The FEHD is continuing to roll out the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign in two phases this year. The first phase was launched in early January and will run until March 15. The second phase, to last for 10 weeks, will be launched in July. During the campaign period, the FEHD will enhance

its inspections and rodent prevention and control measures in target areas including markets, municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars, typhoon shelters, lanes adjacent to food premises and other problematic spots and their peripheries.

In view of the fruitful results of the anti-rodent operations in designated target areas, the FEHD also plans to conduct two rounds of the special operation between the two phases of the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign this year, during which multi-pronged strategies, including improving environmental hygiene and stepping up rodent disinfestation and enforcement actions, will continue to be adopted to strengthen rodent prevention and control at the district level.

In addition, the FEHD is strengthening co-operation with other government departments and provides them with technical assistance in implementation of effective rodent prevention and control measures in areas under their purview, which includes the anti-rodent operations in designated target areas being conducted by the Housing Department, with the support of the FEHD, on a trial basis in two public housing estates to intensify the rodent prevention and control work. The FEHD will also continue to conduct studies and tests on various technologies, such as night vision cameras, thermal imaging cameras and rodent trapping devices driven by pressurised gas, with the aim of enhancing the surveillance of rodent activity and the effectiveness of rodent control.

The spokesman stressed that effective rodent prevention and control hinges on sustained co-operation between the community and the Government. Apart from enhancing the rodent prevention and control work in all districts, the FEHD will also step up public education and publicity targeting different sectors of the community, including co-organising promotional activities with District Councils, to encourage the public to actively participate in the anti-rodent campaigns, and to prevent rodent infestation by eliminating the three survival conditions of rodents, namely food, harbourage and passages, meaning the elimination of the food sources and hiding places of rodents, as well as blockage of their dispersal routes.

For more information on rodent prevention and control measures and the RIR, please visit the FEHD website at www.fehd.gov.hk.