

FEHD releases Rodent Infestation Rate for first half of 2018

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (August 29) that the overall Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) for the first half of 2018 was 2.8 per cent, slightly lower than the figures recorded for the second half of 2017 and the overall RIR for 2017 (both were 3.5 per cent), indicating that rodent infestation in public areas in the territory is generally under control.

An FEHD spokesman said, "According to a territory-wide survey conducted by the department, the RIRs of all districts were below 10 per cent for the first half of 2018, indicating that rodent infestation is not extensive in the area surveyed. Among them, Tsuen Wan recorded the highest RIR at 8.2 per cent.

"The relatively higher RIRs in some districts were mainly caused by poor hygiene conditions at specific spots such as rear lanes, including the accumulation of disused articles, indiscriminate disposal of refuse and improper handling of food remnants, which provide shelter and food for rodents."

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 rodent problem in public places surveyed 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 disinfection 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 disinfection, environmental improvement and cleaning services comprehensively, and promote rodent prevention and control in the community.

"The district RIRs may not fully reflect the actual situation of rodent infestation in the individual districts concerned. 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 spokesman said.

The FEHD has continued to roll out the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign in two phases this year. The first phase was completed in March while the second phase was launched early last month and will run until September 7. During the campaign period, the FEHD enhances its inspections

and rodent 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 addition, in view of the fruitful results of the two rounds of anti-rodent operations in designated target areas last year, the FEHD continues to conduct two rounds of the special operations this year, during which multi-pronged strategies, including improving environmental hygiene, and stepping up rodent disinfestation and enforcement actions, have been adopted to strengthen rodent prevention and control at the district level."

The first round of anti-rodent special operation in designated target areas was conducted in various districts from April to June. During the period, the FEHD enhanced street cleaning services and cleaning of public markets and hawker bazaars in the target areas, strengthened rodent disinfestation work at problematic spots such as rear lanes, refuse collection points, markets, hawker bazaars, cooked food markets and construction sites, and stepped up inspections of food premises, markets, hawker bazaars and cooked food markets. Enforcement actions against food premises causing poor environmental hygiene conditions, food preparation and scullery at rear lanes, and improper handling and disposal of rubbish were also strengthened. The FEHD also arranged health talks for building management offices of private buildings, persons-in-charge of food premises, and market and hawker stall operators to provide information and technical advice on rodent prevention and control. The operation effectively enhanced district rodent prevention and control work. The FEHD will start the second round of anti-rodent special operation in designated target areas in October, which will also last for two months.

The spokesman stressed that effective rodent prevention and control hinges on sustained co-operation between the community and the Government. Apart from continuing to enhance 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 blocking 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.