

Government steps up publicity and education work on bedbug (with photos)

With regard to the recent bedbug issue in some overseas places, in order to reduce the chance of transmission of bedbugs from overseas to the local community, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) together with relevant government departments and organisations stepped up publicity and education work at different levels today (November 8) to enhance the awareness of travellers, the tourism industry and general public on bedbug prevention and control, and will closely monitor the situation and latest development.

The FEHD stepped up publicity and education work at the Hong Kong International Airport from today by distributing promotional leaflets to travelling citizens and incoming visitors. The FEHD, together with the Port Health Division of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH), also reminded airlines and the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AA) to pay attention to the environmental hygiene of aircrafts as well as the Airport. Relevant government departments will conduct a site visit later at the Airport in conjunction with the AA to provide technical advice on bedbug prevention and control. Furthermore, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene, Ms Irene Young, today met with representatives from the hotel industry, providing them with suggestions on bedbug prevention and control and exchanging with them views on the measures and related matters.

A Government spokesman said, "Although information shows that bedbugs will not spread diseases, bedbug bites may cause skin allergy and itchiness and make people feel unwell. The Government therefore takes swift actions to minimise the chance of transmission of bedbugs from overseas to the local community. The Government's work requires the co-operation of the public and relevant trade sectors. We will therefore step up publicity and education work, maintain close communication with relevant sectors and provide different parties with information in order to prevent and control the spread of bedbugs together."

The spokesman said that bedbugs typically hide near where human sleep, such as under mattresses, carpets and baseboards, inside bedsteads, behind wallpapers and walls, and inside the cracks of furniture. For effective prevention and control of bedbug, members of the public are advised to maintain a clean domestic environment, such as cleaning and vacuuming the premises regularly, washing bedding and clothing thoroughly with hot water, avoiding the use of second-hand furniture, replacing worn-out wallpapers soonest possible, and sealing cracks/crevices on walls and the floor promptly.

The spokesman reminded members of the public to stay vigilant and check if there are bedbugs in hotel rooms or public places while travelling abroad. To prevent bringing bedbugs back home, upon returning to Hong Kong, members of the public are advised to check their personal luggage for bedbugs and

wash clothes in hot water (60 degree Celsius) when necessary.

Information on bedbug has been uploaded onto websites of the FEHD and the CHP of the DH (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/library/pdf_pest_control/bedbugs.pdf, and www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/460/107441.html) to help the general public better understand how to prevent and control bedbugs. Where necessary, members of the public may consider engaging a reputable pest control company to tackle bedbugs in private premises.

