

FEHD releases Rodent Infestation Rate for 2019

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (April 22) that the overall Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) for 2019 was 4.2 per cent, higher than the figure recorded in 2018 (3.4 per cent). Rodent infestation in public areas in the territory was generally under control.

An FEHD spokesman said, "Apart from 11.7 per cent recorded in Wan Chai District, the RIRs of all other districts were below 10 per cent for 2019.

"The relatively higher RIRs in some districts were mainly caused by poor hygiene conditions at specific spots and rear lanes, including the accumulation of disused articles, indiscriminate disposal of refuse and improper handling of food remnants, which provide food and shelter for rodents. In response to the survey results, the FEHD had already conducted specific rodent prevention and control actions in relevant locations and will continue to enhance rodent prevention and control measures in all districts, including strengthening street cleansing services, eliminating rodents in rear lanes by poisonous baiting, trapping and filling rat holes, encouraging public participation in rodent prevention and control work, and carrying out public health education and publicity on rodent prevention and control."

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 said, "The district RIRs are not intended to 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 frontline staff and the views of the relevant District Councils and the local community, as well as the district RIR."

The FEHD continues to roll out the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign in two phases this year. The first phase was launched in early January and

ended on March 13. The second phase, to last for 10 weeks, will be launched in July. During the campaign period, the FEHD steps up rodent control work and inspections in target areas including markets, municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars, typhoon shelters, lanes adjacent to food premises and other problematic spots and their peripheries to enhance the effectiveness of the overall rodent prevention and control work in the districts and to achieve sustainable results.

In addition, the FEHD will also conduct an eight-week anti-rodent operation in designated target areas in various districts after each phase 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.

The FEHD has also strengthened co-operation with other government departments and has provided them with technical assistance in implementation of effective rodent prevention and control measures in areas under their purview, which includes conducting anti-rodent operations in designated target areas in more public housing estates by the Housing Department, with the support of the FEHD, 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 and thermal imaging cameras, with the aim of enhancing the surveillance of rodent activity and the effectiveness of rodent prevention and 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 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.