

Government departments conduct All-out Anti-mosquito Operation (with photo)

A special meeting of the Government's inter-departmental Pest Control Steering Committee was held today (August 17) to provide a platform for relevant policy bureaux and departments to better grasp the latest situation of the recent local cases of dengue fever, take immediate enhanced mosquito control work in areas under their purview and carry out the "All-out Anti-mosquito Operation" (Operation). The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, and the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, also attended the meeting.

Mr Cheung said, "I instruct the relevant bureaux and departments to make reference to the modus operandi of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) to carry out anti-mosquito work in areas under their purview, with enhanced strength, coverage and intensity, for co-operating with the Operation in a concerted manner."

Professor Chan, said, "Owing to the continued occurrence of the confirmed dengue fever cases recently, we need to carry out the Operation. As it is the early stage of the outbreak, it is important to take immediate and effective measures to contain the situation.

"The co-operation of all government departments and the participation of all members of the public are crucial for mosquito control. The Food and Health Bureau had already issued letters to the Environmental Hygiene Committees of the 18 District Councils (DC), urging the respective DC to proactively take part in mosquito control work and organise various anti-mosquito operations through the participation by local organisations and mobilisation of their building management networks. These include inspecting areas of particular concern, assisting in education and publicity with a view to raising the awareness of the general public in mosquito prevention and control, and encouraging the community's co-operation in promoting and actively participating in anti-mosquito work in private premises like households and housing estates," she said.

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health explained to the attendees the details of the local dengue fever cases and its risk assessment. According to the current epidemiological information, the outbreak of local dengue fever is still at the early stage, which is a critical moment. Prompt, continuous, intensive and effective anti-mosquito operation must be carried out at this stage to prevent further spread of dengue fever and becoming an endemic disease.

The FEHD briefed the attendees about the territory-wide anti-mosquito actions conducted in the past two days. The FEHD commenced the third phase of the territory-wide anti-mosquito campaign yesterday and enhanced the implementation of the Operation for a period of 10 weeks. During the period,

the FEHD, together with the relevant bureaux/departments and the Hospital Authority, will carry out the Operation in areas under their purview. The measures include:

- * carrying out fogging in the scrubby areas within 200-metre radius of the residences every week to kill adult mosquitoes;
- * carrying out inspection of venues, removing stagnant water, applying insecticide and disposing of abandoned water containers every week with a view to preventing mosquito breeding; and
- * trimming of grass to discourage the resting of adult mosquitoes on the site and facilitate mosquito control work.

All District Environmental Hygiene Offices of the FEHD will prepare a target list covering all the problematic areas within the districts for arrangement of the fogging operations. In addition, the FEHD will enhance mosquito control measures in particular to the areas with Area Ovitrap Indices reaching or above 10 per cent in 2018 and locations with repeated complaints on mosquito infestation.

At the meeting, the FEHD urged all departments to take anti-mosquito measures and carry out the Operation in areas under their purview proactively to kill adult mosquitoes (including those possibly carrying the virus) at a large scale with a view to reducing the risk of the spread of dengue fever.

On public education, the FEHD will widely distribute anti-mosquito posters and pamphlets through close liaison with the relevant government departments and local organisations to enhance public awareness of mosquito prevention and control.

Starting from last month, the survey frequency for all the 57 surveillance areas has been increased from one week per month to two weeks per month. Furthermore, the frequency of survey in all sea and land ports has also been increased from two weeks per month to a weekly basis. Dengue virus and Zika virus testing will continue to be carried out on mosquito samples collected from community areas where Area Ovitrap Indices have reached or exceeded 10 per cent, areas related to local dengue fever cases and in all port areas.

Furthermore, the Education Bureau will remind schools to carry out mosquito control work before the start of the new school year.

Today's meeting was chaired by the Under Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Chui Tak-yi. Government bureaux, departments and organisations attending the meeting were the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department; the Architectural Services Department; the Civil Engineering and Development Department; the Department of Health; the Development Bureau; the Drainage Services Department; the Education Bureau; the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department; the Environmental Protection Department; the FEHD; the Government Property Agency; the Hospital Authority; the Home Affairs

Department; the Housing Department; the Highways Department; the Information Services Department; the Lands Department; the Leisure and Cultural Services Department; the Social Welfare Department; the Transport Department; and the Water Supplies Department.

In the rainy season, the public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from affected areas should apply insect repellent for 14 days (Dengue Fever) or at least 21 days (Zika Virus Infection) upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor. DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the dengue fever pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the FEHD's [Guidebook on Control and Prevention of Mosquito Breeding](#) for more information.

