

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 1403)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

Regarding rodent prevention,

1. some members of the public complained that the rodent problem in public housing estates and their shopping centres, whether managed by the Housing Department (HD) or private companies, cannot be resolved because the methods adopted by HD and the owners of private shopping centres to handle rodent infestation are different. Does the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, as a government department responsible for tackling rodent infestation, have the authority to supervise or assist private contractors to deal with the rodent problem effectively? If yes, what are the details and the expenditure involved? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Han-pan (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

1. While all government departments and private organisations have the responsibility to carry out rodent control work in the premises under their management, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will provide assistance for them when necessary.

FEHD maintains communication with other government departments and provides them with technical support and advice. Joint operations are also mounted to tackle rodent infestation. Examples of the collaboration work between FEHD and other government departments include:

- (a) collaborating with various government departments to conduct 2 rounds of territory-wide and inter-departmental anti-rodent campaign each year;
- (b) arranging exchanges with the relevant government departments through the Inter-departmental Working Group on Pest Prevention and Control to enhance the overall level of rodent control work;

- (c) conducting joint site inspections with the departments in case there is rodent infestation in venues under their management, and taking anti-rodent actions inside and outside the venues concurrently so as to enhance the effectiveness of rodent control;
- (d) providing contract templates on pest control to the contract management units of the relevant departments;
- (e) arranging workshops and talks regarding pest control for the relevant departments, assisting them to adopt effective rodent prevention and control measures in the venues under their management as well as to strengthen their monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of their outsourced contractors;
- (f) formulating the Code of Practice for Rodent Management and making a series of videos on rodent control for reference by the pest control staff of the relevant departments; and
- (g) setting up the Working Group on Rodent Prevention and Control in Public Rental Housing Estates with the Housing Department to implement and strengthen rodent control work in public rental housing estates.

For private premises, apart from conducting site inspections at premises with rodent infestation and providing technical support, FEHD launched the Anti-rodent Charter (the Charter) for residential premises on 31 December 2024 to raise awareness on maintaining environmental hygiene and cultivate good habits among residents to create a rodent-free environment together. All property management companies/owners' corporations/residents' organisations of private residential premises, the Hong Kong Housing Society, transitional housing, subsidised sales flats and Tenants Purchase Scheme estates may sign up to the Charter. The participants should commit to assigning staff to coordinate anti-rodent efforts in their residential estates or buildings, conveying anti-rodent messages to residents, etc., and they will be provided with free anti-rodent technical support by FEHD. FEHD also encourages private buildings to sign up to the Charter to enhance the effectiveness of rodent control and works closely with the pest control trade through exchange of views and provision of guidance and training.

In 2024-25, the overall revised estimated expenditure of FEHD on pest control services was \$871 million. The expenditure covered not only rodent prevention and control but also the prevention and control work of mosquitoes and other arthropod pests with public health importance. Besides, the pest control work of FEHD includes daily inspections, law enforcement, technical support for different departments/organisations, publicity and education, as well as follow-ups to complaints. It does not maintain a separate breakdown of the expenditure involved in its collaboration work with different government departments and private organisations.