

## Guidelines on cockroach prevention and control in food premises

Cockroaches are the most common and troublesome pests in many premises. Common types of cockroaches in Hong Kong include *Periplaneta americana* (American cockroach), *Periplaneta australiasiae* (Australian cockroach) and *Blattella germanica* (German cockroach).

### Activities of Cockroaches in Food Premises

- Cockroaches may be found in food premises ubiquitously including kitchens, store rooms, dining areas, toilets and staff rest areas;
- They prefer dark, warm and moist environment and hide in cracks and crevices on wall, furniture, disused articles and electricity supply switch box;
- They are usually active at night; and
- They are omnivorous but prefer starchy food.

### Hazards Caused by Cockroaches in Food Premises

- Spoilage of food by the strong and special smell of the secretions of cockroaches;
- Damage of stored articles including soaps, packaging materials and clothes;
- Adulteration of food with the presence of cockroaches, their remains, droppings or egg cases;
- Illnesses including food poisoning, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea caused by pathogens carried on the body surface of cockroaches; and
- Allergic responses including rashes, watery eyes and sneezing to allergens present in the excrement and cast-off skins of cockroaches.

### Measures to Prevent and Control Cockroach Infestation

Emphasis should be placed on prevention as it is difficult to control once cockroach infestation has been established.

#### 1. Leave no food for cockroaches

- Cleanse the floor of premises at least daily;
- Cleanse the surface drainage and cooking utensil daily and keep the kitchen dry;
- Store food properly in containers with well-fitted covers and leave no food unattended overnight; and
- Put all refuse and food remnants into refuse collection bins with well-fitted covers. Refuse bags should be tied up before disposal to prevent spilling. Bins must be emptied completely at least daily.

#### 2. Eliminate Harbourage for Cockroaches

- Do not store junk and disused articles, cartons in particular;
- Inspect at least quarterly to eliminate possible harbourages in concealed places

such as false ceilings, air ducts and wire ducts; and

- Seal any cracks and crevices at ceilings and on furniture, walls and floors with appropriate materials such as cement and silica gel.

### 3. Stop Cockroaches from entering premises

- Install drain covers (without openings) which can be opened for the discharge of drainage water. Replace them if they are found damaged;
- Seal all openings on external walls, floors and roofs through which pipes and wires pass or left by installation of air-conditioning system with appropriate materials such as cement and metal plates;
- Apply a band of petroleum jelly at least 10 centimetres in width around the dry drain hole to prevent cockroaches from passing through; and
- Install wire mesh of 2 millimetres at drain holes for preventing entry of *Periplaneta americana*.

### 4. Trapping

- Use sticky traps at places frequently visited by cockroaches. Whenever possible, place traps either against a wall or at corners of a floor, shelf or drawer.

### 5. Poisoning

- Use insecticides with residual effect for killing the pest by contact;
- Set poisonous baits in areas (e.g. kitchen) where application of insecticides is not suitable. The bait will not only kill those cockroaches which have consumed the bait but also those in the harbourage indirectly; and
- Caution must be taken when using insecticides. Follow strictly the application instructions on the label to avoid harming people and animals.

### 6. Handling of cockroaches

- Wear plastic gloves when handling cockroaches; and
- Areas or equipment, including the gloves, should be washed and disinfected with household disinfectant immediately after contact with cockroaches.

### 7. Employing private pest control company

- Consider appointing a pest control company for providing professional services on cockroach control and prevention.

### Enquiry

For enquiry, please contact the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department on 1823.