

## **For Information**

### **LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

#### **Anti-mosquito Measures in Rear Lanes and Private Streets**

### **Purpose**

This paper informs Members on measures taken by the Administration to tackle mosquito problems in rear lanes and private streets.

### **Territory-wide Mosquito Control Strategy**

2. Minimizing the risk of mosquito breeding in rear lanes and private streets is an integral part of the overall mosquito control strategy. The Anti-Mosquito Steering Committee (“the Committee”), chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, comprises representatives from 11 bureaux and departments. The Committee formulates the territory-wide mosquito control strategy with a three-pronged approach which encompasses surveillance, prevention and publicity.

3. On surveillance mechanism, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) implements an Ovitrap Index system to monitor the distribution of *Aedes Albopictus*. Ovitrap traps are installed throughout the territory, including rear lanes and private streets, to provide monthly surveillance information which forms the basis of targeted control measures.

4. On prevention and control, FEHD activates the district inter-departmental anti-mosquito response mechanism to formulate effective anti-mosquito strategies if the Ovitrap Index of an area reaches 20%. Concerned departments will step up inspections of venues under their management and implement mosquito control measures such as cleansing and removal of wastes, containers and stagnant water, clearing of floor drains and surface channels, grass cutting and ground leveling, etc. Stringent adult mosquito control measures such as weekly fogging will also be employed in strategic locations to suppress adult mosquito population whenever necessary.

5. To encourage community participation, district anti-mosquito task force mechanisms (comprising relevant department representatives and district personalities) led by the District Officers (DOs) of the Home Affairs Department have been set up. The task force mechanism focuses on problematic areas which may cut across different departments and actively involves the community in eliminating sources of mosquito breeding. Through closer liaison among government departments and more active involvement of members of the public, anti-mosquito operations are carried out and anti-mosquito message is widely disseminated to various sectors of the community.

6. On the publicity front, the Administration intensifies its promotion effort prior to and during the raining season. Announcement in the public interest (API) on the prevention of mosquito are broadcasted through TV and radio.

### **Anti-Mosquito Measures in Rear Lanes and Private Streets**

7. For rear lanes which are public streets, FEHD is responsible for their environmental hygiene. FEHD carries out daily cleansing and implements anti-mosquito measures such as source reduction works by removing wastes, abandoned articles or receptacles likely to accumulate water, and regular application of larvicides at open ditches.

8. For private streets, the responsibility of maintenance and management rests with the owners. Government will provide assistance under very special circumstances when public interest or safety is involved. As the enforcement agent, FEHD may issue notices under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) requiring owners of private streets to remove accumulated water and take steps to prevent mosquito breeding. Failure to comply with the notice is an offence, and the Department may take action to remove the accumulated water and recover the costs from owners.

9. Accumulation of water in private streets may be due to various factors such as defective drainage or broken road pavement. In the Report on Measures to Improve Environmental Hygiene in Hong Kong released by Team Clean in August 2003, concerned DOs have been tasked to establish a modality of inter-departmental co-ordination for selected environmental hygiene blackspots to tackle the relevant problems by liaising with residents and demarcating responsibilities amongst the concerned departments. If the problem in a private street presents a threat to public health, e.g. a mosquito breeding site, and the property owners have failed to carry out the required ameliorating measures, concerned government departments will take appropriate action first and recover costs from the owners later.

10. A successful example of the aforementioned inter-departmental modality is the improvement works conducted in the rear lane at Pau Chung Street (which is a private street) in Kowloon City. In this case, repair orders were issued to the concerned owners in May 2003. When owners failed to comply with the order, Drainage Services Department, Highways Department and FEHD stepped in, under DO's coordination, to repair the underground drains, sewers and manholes, repave the road surface and lime-wash the lane. The improvement works were completed in March 2004. As at May 2005, costs were recovered from 201 out of 216 of the concerned households. The modality of inter-departmental co-ordination established by Team Clean has set an example for tackling similar environmental hygiene problems.

11. Under Team Clean's hygiene blackspot eradication programme, 140 rear lanes have been identified. Details of the progress of

eradication program are as follows:

	No. of hygiene blackspots involving rear lanes	Progress to-date
Phase 1	51 identified in May 2003	50 (98 %) <sup>1</sup> eradicated
Phase 2	42 identified in November 2003	40 (95 %) <sup>2</sup> eradicated
Phase 3	47 identified in January 2005	14 (30 %) <sup>3</sup> eradicated

### **Latest Development**

12. In addition, the Administration is introducing the Public Health and Municipal Services (Amendment) Bill 2005 to allow the government to take anti-mosquito actions more effectively. The proposed amendments would allow the government to hold management bodies of private premises responsible for taking necessary actions to prevent mosquito breeding. This could help resolve the mosquito breeding problems in common areas of private premises. In case of a possible mosquito-related health hazard, the government would be empowered to take necessary anti-mosquito action with or without notice and to recover the cost from the concerned parties afterwards. These measures would help ensure owners, occupiers and management bodies of private premises act more responsibly.

### **Advice Sought**

13. Members are invited to note the measures taken by the Administration to combat mosquito problems in rear lanes and private streets.

### **June 2005**

#### **Home Affairs Department**

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<sup>1</sup> The one outstanding case is related to unauthorized building works of which court proceedings are underway.

<sup>2</sup> The two outstanding cases involve repaving work which will be carried out soon.

<sup>3</sup> This is the current phase which started in January 2005. Most of the works are still underway.