

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat  
for the meeting on 14 March 2017**

**Rodent control**

**Purpose**

This paper summarizes the views and concerns of members of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene ("the Panel") on rodent control.

**Background**

Rodent surveillance programme and control measures

2. Since 2000, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") has been making use of the rodent infestation rate ("RIR")<sup>1</sup> and the trend movement of RIR to gauge the general situation of rodent infestation in individual districts and as the bases for devising anti-rodent measures and assessing the overall efficacy of FEHD's rodent prevention and disinfestation work. RIR of a district is calculated with reference to the ratio of baits bitten in that district. According to information available on the website of FEHD, in the first half of 2016, RIRs obtained in the 19 districts ranged from 0% to 9.3% and the overall RIR was 4.2%. A summary of RIRs for the whole territory from 2000 to 2015 and for each of the 19 districts in the first half of 2016 is in **Appendix I**.

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<sup>1</sup>

Rodent infestation rate =  $\frac{\text{Number of baits bitten by rodents}}{\text{Total number of baits collected from the selected areas}} \times 100\%$

3. According to the Administration, FEHD will strengthen rodent disinfection operations in a particular district when its RIR reaches 10% or above. If the RIR further reaches 20% or higher, FEHD will set up a task force to liaise and coordinate anti-rodent work among relevant government departments and local organizations such as District Councils, area committees and owners' committees. Rodent disinfection, cleansing work and public education in the community will be stepped up comprehensively.

4. Apart from combating rodent infestation in individual districts on a regular basis, FEHD also organizes anti-rodent campaigns on an annual basis to raise public awareness about the importance of rodent prevention and control and to coordinate community efforts to tackle the problem. When planning anti-rodent campaigns, FEHD makes appropriate adjustments to the overall strategy in the light of the actual state of rodent infestation across the territory and in different districts, as well as the effectiveness of previous anti-rodent campaigns.

### **Members' concerns**

5. The subject of rodent control was regularly discussed at the meetings of the Panel. Members' major views and concerns are summarized below.

#### Rodent surveillance

6. Concern was raised about the criteria adopted for selecting the bait locations under FEHD's territory-wide rodent surveillance programme. There were suggestions that bait locations should be regularly rotated and baits be placed at spots where there were reports that people were bitten by rodents. Some members specifically pointed out that RIRs for some districts were 0% which implied that the districts concerned were rodent-free. These members questioned the reliability of RIRs as to whether they could genuinely reflect the rodent problem of individual districts, thus as a vehicle for measuring the effectiveness of the rodent prevention and control measures implemented by FEHD.

7. According to the Administration, FEHD conducted RIR surveys in rodent-infested areas or places likely to have rodent problem, in particular areas with bustling human activities. The selection of bait locations was based on established scientific criteria. Around 100 to 150 baits, with each one placed at least 50 metres apart, were set in selected localities every six months to gather statistics on the ratio of baits bitten by rodents for the purpose of making meaningful comparison of RIRs using the same standard. Changes to the RIR readings in individual districts over time facilitated FEHD's assessment of

progress made in containing rodent infestation and the overall efficacy of its work, as well as provided an informed basis for allocation of resources. While FEHD would review bait locations from time to time, it would not change the locations within the same year in order to compare RIRs of the same localities on the same basis.

8. The Administration also explained that the lower or 0% RIR recorded in certain districts indicated that the rodent problem in public areas of these districts was largely under control. It should also be noted that there was no internationally adopted RIR, FEHD had made reference to the practices adopted by different countries and places and had tried out different methods when devising its RIR. The method currently adopted was considered suitable for Hong Kong with respect to the local situation and environment.

9. Some members enquired about the reasons for the high variation of RIRs in different districts which, in these members' view, were not so dissimilar in terms of human activities and characteristics. The Administration advised that given the high adaptability and reproductive rate of rodents, the state of rodent infestation in individual districts, as reflected in RIRs, might vary with changes in the environmental hygiene conditions and the level of public participation in the rodent prevention and control work. In general, the relatively higher RIRs in some districts were mainly caused by the less than satisfactory hygiene conditions at specific spots and rear lanes (including accumulation of disused articles, indiscriminate disposal of refuse and improper handling of food remnants), which provided feeding and shelter for rodents.

#### Rodent prevention and control measures

10. Some members considered that intensive anti-rodent operations should be carried out in rodent blackspots, i.e. those areas with high RIR. Some other members, however, expressed worry that the arrangement to step up the rodent disinfestation and cleansing work in areas with high RIR might drive the rodents to migrate from one area to another area. In these members' view, the Administration should strengthen rodent prevention and control measures across the whole territory.

11. The Administration advised that it was rare that rodents would move from one district to another district given their limited range of movement. In conducting anti-rodent operations, FEHD would take into account RIRs of the areas concerned, the complaint figures and the views of the local community. FEHD would also organize territory-wide interdepartmental anti-rodent campaigns every year to promote the continuous and active participation of the public in rodent prevention and control work.

12. Members sought details about FEHD's rodent prevention and control work. According to the Administration, FEHD had been adopting a comprehensive approach in rodent control, i.e. tracing the trails left by rodents, taking a variety of measures including poisoning and trapping of rodents and destroying rat holes. The approach and measures were basically the same as those adopted in major overseas and Mainland cities. The rodenticide used by FEHD was also widely adopted in different countries/cities. As regards the annual anti-rodent campaigns, target areas mainly included markets/municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars, typhoon shelters and rear lanes adjacent to food premises, and other rodent-infested locations and their vicinity. Apart from combating rodent infestation in individual districts, the anti-rodent campaigns also aimed at enhancing public knowledge and awareness of ways of prevention and control of rodents. During the campaigns, on top of stepping up anti-rodent operations in collaboration with relevant government departments, FEHD also distributed promotional leaflets, displayed posters and organized talks to promote anti-rodent knowledge and awareness, with a view to fortifying public education in this respect.

## **Recent developments**

### Audit recommendations

13. There is a chapter on pest surveillance programmes in the Director of Audit's Report No. 63 published on 31 October 2014<sup>2</sup>. In relation to rodent and rat-flea surveillance, the Director of Audit has recommended that the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene should, inter alia, (a) consider widening the network of surveyed areas selected for the rodent surveillance programme; (b) prevent recurrence of incidents in which rodent surveillance were affected by various environmental or human factors, and make necessary adjustments to the compilation of RIRs; (c) review the effectiveness of RIR in providing surveillance information for planning and evaluation of rodent control work; and (d) in consultation with the relevant departments, review the adequacy of the surveillance information currently provided to the departments for assessing the rodent infestation situations of venues under their purview.

14. The Administration will update members on FEHD's rodent prevention and control work at the Panel meeting on 14 March 2017.

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 5 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 63, which is available on the Legislative Council website <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/counmtg/papers/cm20141120-sp030-e.pdf>.

**Relevant papers**

15. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
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## 二零零零年至二零一六年鼠患參考指數

## Annual Rodent Infestation Rates for 2000 – 2016

年份 Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
鼠患參考指數	16.0%	8.8%	9.0%	5.6%	4.1%	4.4%	2.9%	4.8%	6.3%	6.1%
Rodent Infestation Rate										
年份 Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016			
鼠患參考指數	1.5%	1.7%	2.4%	3.1%	3.2%	3.0%	-			
Rodent Infestation Rate										

## 二零一六年鼠患參考指數

## Rodent Infestation Rates in 2016

地區	District	二零一六 上半年 First half of 2016	二零一六 下半年 Second half of 2016	二零一六 全年 Overall of 2016
中/西區	Central/Western	7.1%		
東區	Eastern	3.4%		
南區	Southern	4.4%		
灣仔區	Wan Chai	3.6%		
離島區	Islands	0.0%		
九龍城區	Kowloon City	4.6%		
觀塘區	Kwun Tong	4.1%		
旺角區	Mong Kok	9.3%		
深水埗區	Sham Shui Po	7.7%		
黃大仙區	Wong Tai Sin	2.9%		
油尖區	Yau Tsim	3.7%		
北區	North	4.4%		
西貢區	Sai Kung	0.9%		
沙田區	Shatin	0.9%		
大埔區	Tai Po	0.9%		
荃灣區	Tsuen Wan	6.2%		
屯門區	Tuen Mun	1.7%		
元朗區	Yuen Long	4.4%		
葵青區	Kwai Tsing	5.3%		
鼠患參考指數	Rodent Infestation Rate	4.2%		

Relevant papers on rodent control

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene	11.7.2012 (Item IV)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
	11.6.2013 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a> <a href="#">Administration's follow-up paper on the rodent prevention and control measures (LC Paper No. CB(2)320/13-14(01))</a>
	10.3.2014*	<a href="#">Administration's response to Hon Christopher CHUNG's letter dated 28 February 2014 regarding the rise in rodent infestation rate (LC Paper No. CB(2)1021/13-14(01))</a>
	27.6.2014*	<a href="#">Administration's information paper on rodent prevention and control measures (LC Paper No. CB(2)1926/13-14(01))</a>
Public Accounts Committee	31.10.2014*	<a href="#">Report No. 63 of the Director of Audit on the results of value for money audits - October 2014 (Chapter 5)</a>

\* Issue date