

Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene

Keep Clean Measures

PURPOSE

Building on the spirit of the “Keep Clean 2015 @ Hong Kong: Our Home” campaign, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department’s (FEHD) comes up with new strategies and measures for the keep clean cause. This paper briefs Members on these new strategies and measures, including the installation of Internet Protocol (IP) cameras, the establishment of Dedicated Enforcement Teams for enhanced enforcement action against public cleanliness offences, and enhanced rodent and mosquito control measures.

(I) INSTALLATION OF INTERNET PROTOCOL CAMERAS

2. FEHD periodically reviews both cleansing of and enforcement against hygiene blackspots, with a view to tackling the environmental hygiene problems caused by frequent deposits of refuse at individual sites, in particular during midnight or small hours. Apart from stepping up cleansing, publicity, education and enforcement efforts, since late 2016, FEHD conducted a pilot scheme to install IP cameras at six fly-tipping blackspots in Central & Western, Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long Districts to:

- (a) step up surveillance on illegal dumping of refuse; and
- (b) plan for more effective enforcement actions, with the time and patterns of the offences identified through the information captured from the footage recorded.

3. After review, the trial scheme is considered very effective in curbing illegal dumping activities and changing the behaviour of habitual offenders. The amount of refuse illegally deposited at blackspots and the number of complaints have dropped significantly after the installation.

For example, the illegal dumping of refuse in Yuen Long Pak Sha Tsuen refuse collection point (RCP) was reduced from 30 tonnes to about one tonne daily. There represents marked improvement in the hygiene condition of the blackspots, and the improved condition can be maintained with sustained efforts of publicity and enforcement action after the trial scheme.

4. In terms of the offences curbed, the IP camera has been very effective in tackling direct deposit of refuse from vehicles or unloading of refuse from vehicles by offenders at blackspots, since vehicle registration numbers of their vehicles will be captured by IP cameras, in which enforcement officers can probe into the cases with car registration particulars and evasion of liability is unlikely. As with the other category of illegal acts, i.e. delivery and deposit of refuse to blackspots by handcarts, IP camera has also achieved certain deterrence although its prime function is to collect information (such as the time of offence) to facilitate planning of targeted enforcement. Based on the intelligence collected by the camera, planned blitz operation would be conducted at the high time of illegal activities.

5. During the trial scheme, we also identified certain misbehaviour which is related to the operation of RCPs. Due to the closure of the RCPs at late night, some nearby residents, shop operators, or private refuse collectors, in the past, resorted to fly-tipping outside these RCPs. Their offences might not be intentional. To avert this, FEHD extends the opening hours of the RCPs to meet the operational need as far as practicable, subject to the consent of respective District Councils (DCs).

6. Given the encouraging result of the trial scheme, we consider that the scheme can be extended to other districts in a progressive manner, subject to availability of extra resources. We will complete consulting the DCs on the hygiene blackspots at which IP cameras should be installed by end September 2017. The initial responses from the consulted DCs are positive. We aim to roll out the extended scheme as early as March 2018.

(II) ESTABLISHMENT OF DEDICATED ENFORCEMENT TEAMS

7. With rising living standard, members of the public have higher expectation for better environmental hygiene in public places. FEHD has also been asked by some quarters to strengthen law enforcement action against public cleanliness offences including littering, spitting, dog fouling and illegal bills. Since late June 2017, FEHD has set up six dedicated enforcement teams (DETs), with each team comprising 1 Senior Foreman and 4 to 5 Foremen, to step up enforcement action against various public cleanliness offences.

8. Performing enforcement duties in plain clothes, DETs are deployed to various littering blackspots, such as blackspots of illegal dumping of bagged refuse, public transport interchanges, vicinity outside Jockey Club Off-course Betting Centres or Mass Transit Railway Stations, and public places with conglomeration of food premises and shops, to take enforcement action against public cleanliness offences, for example, improper feeding of feral birds, dog fouling in public place, indiscriminate disposal of used vehicle tyres, littering and obstruction in connection with parallel trading activities at blackspots and littering from vehicle onto public places (including the planters or landscape areas in central dividers, roadsides or cross road facilities). DETs also organise blitz operations based on the information of illegal dumping activities to catch offenders red-handed for littering on the spot, including the intelligence collected from IP cameras. From 20 June 2017 to 3 September 2017 (around 2.5 months), DETs issued 708 fixed penalty notices. Apart from prosecution, DETs would also convey health message, distribute leaflets and warning notices to arouse public awareness of maintaining street cleanliness and the proper way for disposal of refuse.

(III) ENHANCED ANTI-MOSQUITO MEASURES

9. The total rainfall recorded this year was above normal, and the number of days with rain was significantly more than that in previous years. The hot and rainy weather of summer is conducive to massive mosquito breeding within a short period of time.

10. FEHD is concerned about mosquito infestation and has enhanced our efforts in mosquito prevention and control measures.

- (a) Additional Manpower on Pest Control: In addition to about 700 departmental staff deployed on pest control (including mosquito control), FEHD engages private contractors to provide mosquito control services across the territory through roving teams. Together with the additional roving teams under the District-led Actions Scheme, the number of roving teams has increased by 5% (from 273 (with a private contractor workforce of about 1 640) in August 2016 to 288 in August 2017 (with a private contractor workforce of about 1 730)) to strengthen mosquito control in the season;
- (b) Setting up of Pest Control Inspection Teams (PCIT): Four PCITs, each comprising one retired Senior Overseer / Overseer and four Environmental Nuisance Investigators, have been set up since late May 2017 to enhance inspection of construction sites and enforcement against mosquito breeding. Between late May and late August 2017, a total of 506 construction sites were inspected and 148 prosecutions were instituted;
- (c) Enhanced inter-departmental anti-mosquito mechanism to identify New Construction Sites/ Road Works/ Minor Building Works: To enhance the coverage of FEHD's inspections to the building construction / minor building works sites and delivery of education on mosquito control to the operators, FEHD has worked out in late 2016, in collaboration with the relevant departments, a liaison mechanism in which, Housing Department and Highways Department would inform FEHD the locations of all new construction sites. Under the arrangement, FEHD will also liaise with Home Affairs Department and/or Buildings Department with a view to offering advice on how to enhance mosquito control when carrying out minor building works;

- (d) Enhanced Publicity and Public Education: Given the important role played by local communities in keeping the environment of Hong Kong clean, we have stepped up our publicity and education efforts, including broadcasting two sets of TV and Radio APIs on anti-mosquito measures to be taken by general public and property management companies, broadcasting TV APIs at MTR trackside TV and in-train TV of East Rail and an 8-second promotional message at Commercial Radio; displaying a poster urging the public to take anti-mosquito measures at MTR and East Rail, bus bodies and bus shelters since July 2017.

(IV) ENHANCED RODENT CONTROL MEASURES

11. FEHD has been taking the lead all along in organising territory-wide interdepartmental anti-rodent campaigns on an annual basis to strengthen rodent prevention and control and remind the public of the importance of rodent prevention and control. In 2017, the anti-rodent campaign was conducted in two phases from 2 January to 10 March and from 3 July to 8 September in the 19 districts of Hong Kong, with the theme of “Eliminate Rodent Nuisance - Take Preventive Measures”. 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. The annual number of rodents collected or killed increased from 31 800 in 2014 to 37 200 in 2016. In the first phase campaign period this year, FEHD carried out a total of 14 135 inspections with 3 719 dead rodents and 2 003 live rodents collected, 1 074 rat holes destroyed, and 825 warnings issued. Apart from combating rodent infestation in individual districts, the anti-rodent campaigns also aim at enhancing public knowledge and awareness of ways of prevention and control of rodents.

12. In spite of the use of effective rodenticides and trapping devices, the ultimate success in rodent control depends on scrupulous implementation of fundamental control measures by depleting food attractions and harbourages for rodents as well as comprehensive rodent-proof measures to prevent re-infestation. In this connection, FEHD applied a new “multi-pronged” strategy in conducting a two-month anti-

rodent operation in designated target areas¹ in all districts commencing on 8 May 2017. The multi-pronged strategies adopted a comprehensive approach in rodent control with emphasis on fundamental control by improving hygienic condition to deplete food, harbourages and dispersal routes of rodents, and supplemented by a variety of direct control measures including poisoning, trapping, destroying rat holes, etc. The operations applied simultaneously all dimensions of control measures viz. public education and publicity, cleansing, rodent disinfection and enforcement action, to combat the rodent problem in a defined area². Considerable improvement on the site condition was observed after the series of operations.

13. In order to sustain the effect of the second phase of the Anti-rodent Campaign 2017 from 3 July to 8 September, FEHD proposes to roll out another two-month anti-rodent operation in designated target areas commencing in September 2017. FEHD will continue to monitor the situation of rodent infestation in the districts and implement appropriate control measures.

¹ Each District Environmental Hygiene Office of FEHD took into account factors including rodent infestation rate (RIR), the number of rodent complaints received, views of the local community, the number of food premises and "three-nil" buildings in identifying a designated target area (covering a few thoroughfares) in each district to carry out targeted anti-rodent operations.

² Since the launch of the operation on 8 May 2017, FEHD has strengthened rodent disinfection work at problematic spots including rear lanes, refuse collection points, markets, hawker bazaars, cooked food markets and construction sites. During the operations, FEHD placed poisonous baits at 4 976 locations and 10 984 traps, and destroyed 270 rat holes, with 667 dead rodents collected and 520 rodents caught in traps. FEHD also stepped up inspections of food premises, markets, hawker bazaars and cooked food markets. Enforcement action against food premises causing poor environmental hygiene conditions, scullery and food preparation at rear lanes, and improper handling and disposal of rubbish was strengthened. During the operations, FEHD conducted 6 173 inspections and issued 3 203 health advice, 1 680 verbal warnings and 34 warning letters, and took out 312 prosecutions. In addition, FEHD staff enhanced street cleansing services and cleansing of public markets and hawker bazaars in the target areas. FEHD also stepped up public education and publicity and arranged 204 health talks for building management offices of private buildings, persons-in-charge of food premises, and market and hawker stall operators to provide information and technical advice on rodent prevention and control.

CONCLUSION

14. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Food and Health Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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