

LCQ13: Rodent infestation on indoor premises managed by LCSD

Following is a question by Hon Tanya Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 27):

Question:

It has been reported that recently some members of the public had spotted rats while visiting the Hong Kong Museum of History. The rats might scare visitors and staff and also damage the collections of the museum. Regarding rodent infestation in indoor premises managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the number and details of the reports received by LCSD of rats being spotted on the indoor premises (including libraries, museums, civic centres and indoor stadia) under its management, as well as the number and details of the reports of facilities, exhibits or other items on the premises having been damaged allegedly by rats, in each of the past three years; and

(b) whether LCSD has drawn up procedure and guidelines on the cleaning and anti-rodent work on various indoor premises; if it has, of the details and whether it will conduct a review in response to the aforesaid incident; if not, whether the authorities will consider drawing up the relevant procedure and guidelines expeditiously?

Reply:

President,

(a) In 2007, 2008 and 2009 (up to mid-May), the numbers of rat spotting reports received in the indoor venues (including libraries, museums, civic centres and sports centres) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) were 14, 22 and 10 respectively. Upon receipt of the reports, venue staff immediately contacted the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) for follow-up actions including the placing of rat baits and traps, attempting to catch the rats, filling up of rat holes, etc. Prompt arrangements were also made for contractors to carry out

thorough cleansing and sanitisation at the respective venues. In the aforementioned cases, there was no report of damage inflicted by rats on the exhibits or facilities.

(b) The cleansing work of all LCSD venues is outsourced to cleansing contractors. The cleansing contracts have specified the related guidelines, procedures and frequency of cleansing and sanitisation for the facilities. Take museums as an example, the contractors have to perform daily cleansing before, during and after the opening hours. In addition, all refuse must be cleared from the museums every day. For prevention of rodent infestation, the contractors also inspect possible hiding places of rats inside the museums, detect signs of rat presence (e.g. rat droppings), and report such signs, if any, to the FEHD immediately for follow-up actions. Apart from placing rat traps and baits, other anti-rodent operations and preventive measures will be carried out in accordance with the observations and recommendations of the FEHD. Professional rodent control contractors will also be engaged to perform large-scale anti-rodent work at the venues when needed.

Staff at LCSD venues will continue to monitor closely the cleansing work at their respective venues and step up the related cleansing work and anti-rodent measures as necessary.

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