

# Rodent Control in Residential Properties

Best Practice Guide

Code No.: G27/2026



## Preamble

Pursuant to section 44<sup>1</sup> of the Property Management Services Ordinance (Cap. 626) (“PMSO”), the Property Management Services Authority (“PMSA”) issued this Best Practice Guide (“Guide”) for enabling licensees<sup>2</sup> to more effectively and professionally implement rodent control measures in residential properties when providing their services, thereby improving environmental hygiene. While licensees are encouraged to use their best endeavours to follow the Guide, failure to comply with the Guide will, however, not be regarded as a disciplinary offence referred to in section 4 of the PMSO.

## Background

2. A licensed property management companies (“PMC”) may, from time to time, be involved in handling rodent infestations in common areas or private premises when providing property management services (“PMS”) to its clients<sup>3</sup>. Rodents not only spread diseases (such as plague and Hantavirus infection<sup>4</sup>), posing risks to public health, but their gnawing habits also damage building structures, electrical wiring, and property, causing financial losses. Given their rapid reproduction rate, rodent populations can surge significantly within a short period if not controlled promptly. Therefore, PMCs and relevant stakeholders have to take effective measures to prevent and control rodent infestations. This Guide aims to enable PMCs and their licensed property management practitioners<sup>5</sup> (“PMP”) to more effectively and professionally carry out and monitor rodent control work, thereby protecting the health of their clients and property users and maintain good environmental hygiene.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 44 of the PMSO provides: “The Authority may do anything it considers appropriate for it to do for, or in relation to, the performance of its functions.”

<sup>2</sup> The term “licensee” means the holder of the following licence: a PMC licence; a PMP (Tier 1) licence; a PMP (Tier 2) licence; a provisional PMP (Tier 1) licence; or a provisional PMP (Tier 2) licence.

<sup>3</sup> The term “client” has the same meaning as defined in section 16 of the PMSO, i.e., “in relation to a property for which a licensed PMC provides PMSs, means - (a) the owners’ organization of the property; and (b) the owners of the property who pay or are liable to pay the management expenses in respect of the services”.

<sup>4</sup> Hantaviruses are primarily found in rodents (such as rats and voles) and belong to the Bunyaviridae family. For more information, please refer to the website of the Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health :(<https://www.chp.gov.hk/tc/healthtopics/content/24/3057.html>)

<sup>5</sup> According to Section 2 of the PMSO, licensed PMP means (a) a licensed PMP (Tier 1); or (b) a licensed PMP (Tier 2).



# Relevant Laws, Regulations and Responsibilities

## Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132)

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3. According to Section 47 (refer to **Annex 1**) of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) (“PHMSO”), the owner, occupier, owners’ corporation<sup>6</sup> (“OC”) or PMC of premises has the duty to ensure that the premises are free from infestation by vermin.
4. If the Authority (i.e., the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene)<sup>7</sup> discovers that premises or any part thereof are infested with vermin, the Authority may issue to the relevant owner or occupier concerned a “Notice of Elimination of Vermin”<sup>8</sup>. As regards rodent control in the common areas of a property, the Authority may issue a “Notice of Elimination of Vermin” to the OC or the manager (if there is no OC) responsible for managing the relevant common areas<sup>9</sup>, so that the problem can be addressed in a timely manner. Failure to comply with the “Notice of Elimination of Vermin” is an offence. Upon conviction, the offender may be liable to a fine of up to HK\$25,000, with a daily fine of HK\$450<sup>10</sup>.
5. Where the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”) deems immediate intervention necessary due to pest infestation, it may take reasonable steps to eliminate or remove pests from the premises concerned even if it has not issued a “Notice of Elimination of Vermin” to the property owner, occupier, OC or manager (if there is no OC)<sup>11</sup>. The FEHD may subsequently recover the expenses incurred for such rodent control work from the property owner, occupier or OC<sup>12</sup>.
6. Furthermore, where the FEHD considers a particular premises to be infested with vermin, it may place any equipment (such as traps, bait containers, baits) for testing or assessing the vermin infestations<sup>13</sup>. Any person who interferes with such equipment placed by the FEHD without lawful authority or reasonable excuse commits an offence. Upon conviction, the maximum penalty is a fine of HK\$5,000<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> An OC is a body corporate set up under the Building Management Ordinance (Cap. 344). It has the legal status to represent all owners in managing the common parts of the property.

<sup>7</sup> According to section 3 and the Third Schedule of the PHMSO, the relevant “Authority” refers to the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene.

<sup>8</sup> See section 47(1) of the PHMSO

<sup>9</sup> See sections 47(1A) and 47(1B) of the PHMSO

<sup>10</sup> See section 47(2) and the Ninth Schedule of the PHMSO

<sup>11</sup> See section 47(4) of the PHMSO

<sup>12</sup> See section 47(6) of the PHMSO

<sup>13</sup> See section 47(4A) of the PHMSO

<sup>14</sup> See section 47(5) and the Ninth Schedule of the PHMSO

## Common Law Duty of Care

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7. The owner of a property has a common law duty of care for the property to prevent rodent infestations that may cause damage or disturbance to third parties. If neighbouring residents or others are affected due to the owner's failure to properly control rodents, the owner may be held liable for relevant civil responsibilities. Therefore, the owner has to properly control rodents and maintain the cleanliness and hygiene of their property.

## Deed of Mutual Covenant ("DMC") of a property

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8. The DMC of a property is a legal document which is binding on all owners of the property and stipulates clearly the rights, interests and obligations of owners, the PMC, etc. regarding the supervision, repair, maintenance and management of private areas, common parts and facilities, etc. within the property.

## Duties of Owners

9. An owner of a property owns undivided shares of the land on which the building is erected, and also co-owns with other owners the common parts of the property; hence owners or the OC have the duty to properly maintain the environmental hygiene of the common areas. The owners or OC have to ensure that the property is maintained in good condition, prevent rodent infestation, and avoid causing disturbances and health risks to others and the environment. Rodent control within owner's private unit is the duty of the individual owner, who has to maintain the cleanliness of the unit.

## General Duties of Licensed PMC

10. If a licensed PMC receives a "Notice of Elimination of Vermin" issued by the Authority<sup>15</sup> under the PHMSO<sup>16</sup>, it has to comply with the notice by completing the cleaning of the relevant common areas of the property within the specified timeframe and take appropriate measures to remove the rodents.
11. In addition, licensed PMC should remind owners / residents of properties to which it provides PMS to regularly inspect and properly maintain the environmental hygiene of their private premises so as to prevent and eliminate rodent infestations. Upon discovering rodent problems or related environmental hygiene issues, it

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<sup>15</sup> See footnote 7

<sup>16</sup> See footnote 9



should remind owners / residents to take proactive measures (such as engaging professionals to inspect and eliminate rodent infestations) to reduce the impact of rodent infestations on others and the environment.

12. Licensed PMC should, as far as reasonably practicable, detect rodent infestations and environmental hygiene problems as early as possible and take appropriate measures promptly to prevent the rodent infestations from worsening, thereby avoiding adverse effects on the residents' health and the environment. Licensed PMC should refer to the following "Guidelines for Rodent Control Measures" to strengthen related control efforts :

(i) **Block the entrance - preventing rats from entering the premises**

Rodents can enter buildings through narrow gaps and cracks larger than 6 mm. The exterior and interior of the building should be inspected for possible entry points, including doors, windows, pipes (such as whether the distance between pipes and walls allows rodents to climb, and whether exterior pipes are fitted with rodent-proof barriers that meet rodent control standards), and gaps around utility lines. These openings should be blocked with suitable rodent-proof materials (such as concrete, cement, galvanized steel sheet no. 20, rolled-up wire mesh, or extended galvanized steel mesh no. 24 with a mesh size no larger than 6 mm, or standard gauge no. 22 galvanized steel mesh, etc.)<sup>17</sup>.

(ii) **Keep clean - cutting off food sources**

Rodents are attracted to food. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that food sources are properly stored in all public areas (particularly near food premises), waste disposal areas, and individual units. Food should be stored in rodent-proof, sealed containers and garbage should be disposed of regularly in bins with properly covered lids. Residents should be encouraged to promptly clean up spilled food and debris. Waste storage areas should be kept clean and free of clutter. Garbage bins should be properly maintained and stored in designated areas with appropriate rodent control measures. As far as practicable, garbage should be cleared daily and not stored overnight in the premises. If overnight storage is unavoidable, effective management measures should be implemented to ensure hygiene and safety, and to prevent adverse impacts on the surrounding environment.

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<sup>17</sup> Please refer to the "Guidelines on Rodent Control Design and Mosquito/Rodent Control Measures at Construction/Demolition Sites" issued by the Buildings Department. See the following webpage for details: ([https://www.bd.gov.hk/doc/en/resources/codes-and-references/practice-notes-and-circular-letters/circular/2025/CL\\_GRDNBMRPCMCD52025e.pdf](https://www.bd.gov.hk/doc/en/resources/codes-and-references/practice-notes-and-circular-letters/circular/2025/CL_GRDNBMRPCMCD52025e.pdf))

(iii) **Vegetation / flower bed management - removing hiding spots**

Overgrown vegetation and clutter around buildings can provide hiding places for rodents. The soil in flower beds is easily invaded by rodents, which can then dig burrows. Therefore, shrubs, trees and lawns should be trimmed regularly, and dead leaves, plant debris, garbage, and other waste should be removed from the flower beds to facilitate early detection of rodent infestations. The outer walls of the flower beds should be at least one meter high and constructed with smooth-surfaced materials. Drainage holes should be sealed with rodent-proof metal mesh to prevent rodent entry.

(iv) **Regular inspection**

Inspections of buildings and their surroundings for signs of rodent activity, such as droppings, gnaw marks, burrows, scratches, and other hiding places, should be conducted regularly. Particular attention should be paid to areas near restaurants and garbage collection facilities, attics, flower beds, utility rooms, and storage areas. Early detection of rodent infestations can prevent problem from worsening.

(v) **Use of traps and poison bait**

If a rodent infestation is detected, rodent traps and / or poison baits may be used to control their numbers. Rodent traps or poison baits should be placed in areas where rodents are observed (such as along walls and in corners). When using poison baits, only rodenticides approved by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department / registered in Hong Kong should be used, following the manufacturer's complete usage instructions, product label directions, and precautionary measures. Before using poison baits, owners / residents should be notified in advance, reminding them to be careful and avoid contact with the baits, and bait boxes should be used wherever possible to minimize the risk of accidental contact with the baits by owners / residents (particularly children) and non-target organisms.

(vi) **Professional pest control services**

When necessary, professional pest control companies should be engaged to provide appropriate rodent control services<sup>18</sup>. Before the rodent control work begins, owners / residents should be notified and reminded of necessary precautions (such as keeping children away from poison baits or rodent control devices). Although professional pest control personnel possess relevant expertise and tools, and can develop long-term rodent control strategies, their service quality should still be closely monitored to ensure that their services are appropriate and effective.

<sup>18</sup>

For choosing a professional pest control company, please refer to the "How to Select a Pest Control Company" pamphlet issued by the FEHD. See the following webpage for details :  
([https://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/library/pdf\\_pest\\_control/select\\_pestcntl\\_e.pdf](https://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/library/pdf_pest_control/select_pestcntl_e.pdf))

(vii) **Educating the residents**

The residents should be educated about the importance of rodent prevention and control, and guidelines on proper food storage, waste disposal, and environmental hygiene should be provided. The residents should also be encouraged to promptly report any signs of rodent infestation to the property management office.

(viii) **Monitoring and evaluation**

After implementing rodent control measures, regular monitoring is essential to ensure their effectiveness. Maintain close communication with the pest control company to understand the implementation of the measures taken and closely monitor their effectiveness. The rodent control measures should be adjusted in a timely manner based on continuous observations and feedback from owners / residents. PMCs may use the “Rodent Control Checklist (Residential Estates / Buildings)” (refer to **Annex 2**) to assist in recording and following up on related rodent control work.

## Anti-rodent Charter

13. Successful rodent control relies on the concerted efforts and active participation of property management personnel and the general public. This involves implementing good hygiene practices complemented by effective rodent-prevention measures, as well as elimination of the 3 fundamental survival conditions of rodents in the environment, namely food, harbourage and passages, i.e., the elimination of food sources and hiding places of rodents, as well as blockage of their dispersal routes, so as to achieve sustainable anti-rodent control effect.
14. To further enhance the effectiveness of rodent control work, the FEHD has launched the “Anti-rodent Charter”<sup>19</sup>, encouraging PMCs to actively implement rodent prevention measures in their daily property management work, strengthen monitoring and public education, and promote communication and collaboration with residents and relevant stakeholders to jointly create a cleaner and safer living environment. The FEHD welcomes eligible PMCs to sign the “Anti-rodent Charter” and share the responsibility for rodent control. PMCs interested in knowing further information may contact the FEHD’s Pest Control Advisory Section<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> The FEHD implements the “Anti-rodent Charter” and invites PMCs, OCs, owners’ organizations of private residential properties, the Hong Kong Housing Society, transitional housing, subsidized sale flats, and tenant purchase scheme estates to sign the “Anti-rodent Charter”. For details, please visit the following FEHD website : ([https://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/anti\\_rodent\\_charter.html](https://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/anti_rodent_charter.html))

<sup>20</sup> For any enquiries, please contact the FEHD’s Pest Control Advisory Section by email ([anti\\_rodentcharter@feh.d.gov.hk](mailto:anti_rodentcharter@feh.d.gov.hk)) or by telephone (3188 2406).

# Annex 1

## Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132)

### 47. Cleansing of verminous premises

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- (1) Where it appears to the Authority that any premises or vessel, or any part of any premises or vessel, are or is infested with vermin, the Authority may cause a notice to be served upon the owner or occupier of such premises or vessel, or such part of any premises or vessel, requiring him, within such time as may be specified in the notice, to cleanse such premises or vessel, or such part of any premises or vessel as may be specified in such notice, and to take such other steps for the purpose of destroying and removing any vermin as the Authority may in such notice direct.
- (1A) Without limiting subsection (1), if it appears to the Authority that any common parts of any premises that are a building (or part of a building) are infested with vermin, the Authority may, by notice served on the person responsible for the management of the premises, require the person to do either or both of the following—
  - (a) cleanse the common parts (or part of the common parts) within a period specified in the notice;
  - (b) take any other steps specified in the notice for destroying and removing the vermin. (*Added 13 of 2025 s. 5*)
- (1B) In subsection (1A), the reference to a person responsible for the management of any premises that are a building (or part of a building) is a reference to—
  - (a) if there is an owners' corporation for the building (or part of the building)—the owners' corporation; or
  - (b) if there is no such owners' corporation—the manager (within the meaning of Cap. 344) of the building (or part of the building). (*Added 13 of 2025 s. 5*)
- (2) If the person on whom a notice is served under subsection (1) or (1A) fails to comply with any of the requirements thereof— (*Amended 13 of 2025 s. 5*)
  - (a) such person shall be guilty of an offence; and
  - (b) the Authority may execute, or cause to be executed, such work as may be necessary to satisfy the requirements of such notice, and, subject to subsections (2A) and (3), may recover any expenses thereby incurred from such person. (*Amended 13 of 2025 s. 5*)

- (2A) If the notice concerned is one that is served under subsection (1A), the Authority may recover any expenses under subsection (2)(b) only if the person on whom the notice is served is an owners' corporation. *(Added 13 of 2025 s. 5)*
- (3) In any proceedings under the provisions of subsection (2), the court may inquire whether any requirement contained in any notice served, or any work done, by the Authority under the provisions of this section was reasonable and whether the expenses incurred by the Authority in doing that work, or any part thereof, ought to be borne wholly or in part by the person upon whom the notice was served, and may make such order concerning those expenses or their apportionment as appears to it to be just having regard to all the circumstances.
- (4) Notwithstanding anything contained in this section, where it appears to the Authority that any premises or vessel, or any part of any premises or vessel, are or is infested with vermin, the Authority may, without serving a notice under subsection (1) or (1A), forthwith take such reasonable steps as may be required to destroy or remove therefrom any vermin. *(Amended 13 of 2025 s. 5)*
- (4A) If it appears to the Authority that any premises or vessel (or any part of any premises or vessel) are or is infested with vermin, the Authority may place in the premises or vessel (or part of the premises or vessel) any equipment (however described) for—
- (a) conducting tests; or
  - (b) assessing vermin proliferation. *(Added 13 of 2025 s. 5)*
- (4B) When exercising a power under subsection (4) or (4A) in respect of any premises or vessel, the Authority may not—
- (a) make any structural alteration to the premises or vessel (or part of the premises or vessel);
  - (b) move—
    - (i) any fixture; or
    - (ii) any fittings, furniture or equipment, of a substantial nature; or
  - (c) otherwise cause any unreasonable inconvenience to the occupier of the premises or vessel (or part of the premises or vessel). *(Added 13 of 2025 s. 5)*

- (5) If—
- (a) the Authority has placed any thing (such as any trap, bait container or other equipment and any bait or other substance) in any premises or vessel for exercising a power under subsection (4) or (4A) in respect of the premises or vessel; and
  - (b) a person, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, knowingly—
    - (i) removes, destroys or otherwise interferes with the thing; or
    - (ii) causes, suffers or permits the thing to be removed, destroyed or otherwise interfered with,the person commits an offence. (*Replaced 13 of 2025 s. 5*)
- (6) If any expenses have been incurred in exercising a power under subsection (4) in respect of any premises or vessel, the expenses may be recovered from the person in charge of the premises or vessel as a civil debt due to the Government. (*Added 13 of 2025 s. 5*)
- (7) For the purposes of subsection (6), if the person in charge mentioned in that subsection consists of 2 or more persons, all of them are jointly and severally liable for the expenses. (*Added 13 of 2025 s. 5*)

- (8) In this section—

**Cap. 344** (《第344章》) means the Building Management Ordinance (Cap. 344);

**common parts** (公用部分) has the meaning given by section 2 of Cap. 344;

**owners' corporation** (業主立案法團), in relation to a building (or part of a building), means the corporation registered under section 8 of Cap. 344 for the building (or part of the building);

**person in charge** (負責人) means—

- (a) in relation to any premises that are common parts of a building—
  - (i) the owners' corporation for the building (or part of the building); or
  - (ii) if there is no such owners' corporation—the owner of the premises; or
- (b) in relation to any other premises or a vessel—
  - (i) the occupier of the premises or vessel; or
  - (ii) the owner of the premises or vessel. (*Added 13 of 2025 s. 5*)



## Annex 2

# Rodent Control Checklist (Residential Estates / Buildings)

Inspection items	Inspection date							
1. All flower beds and roads have been inspected for signs of rodent infestation.								
2. Plants have been trimmed to facilitate early detection of rodent infestations.								
3. The piled-up items have been cleared.								
4. Residents' trash is cleared at least once a day.								
5. The garbage bags have been tied up and placed in the covered garbage collection bins.								
6. The used garbage bins have been thoroughly cleaned.								
7. The garbage room has been properly maintained and cleaned. If the garbage room is equipped with garbage chutes, it has been ensured to be free of obstruction.								
8. The trash in public areas has been cleared.								
9. The storage room / machine room has been properly cleaned and is free of accumulated items.								
10. The drainage pipe openings have been fitted with iron gratings with gaps of less than 6 mm and meeting rodent-proof specifications, or plugged with barbed wire balls.								
11. All damaged iron gratings have been replaced.								
12. All gaps, including those left in walls, floors, or ceilings after the installation of water pipes, electrical wires, or split-type air conditioners, have been sealed with cement or metal plates.								
13. Damaged pavements and walls have all been repaired.								
14. The gap at the bottom of the door is less than 6 mm. At least 30 cm high metal kick plate has been installed at the bottom of the door (including the door frame).								
15. Ventilation / exhaust vents and louvers have been fitted with sturdy wire mesh with a mesh size not exceeding 6 mm.								
16. Rodent-proof barriers that meet rodent-proof specifications have been properly installed on the pipes on the exterior walls.								
17. Covered garbage tins (if any) have been placed on each floor, with lids of suitable size, and have been properly cleaned for the collection of residents' trash.								
	Inspector :							
	Signed by :							

### Remarks:

- Put a "✓" in the box to indicate that the situation is satisfactory.
- Put a "X" to the box to indicate unsatisfactory situation that requires immediate rectification. Upon completion of corrective actions, please sign in the corresponding box to confirm.

If there is any inconsistency between the Chinese version and the English version of this Guide, the Chinese version shall prevail.

If there are any amendments to any laws or regulations mentioned in this Guide, licensees have to act in accordance with the revised provisions.

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