



F R O M	Name & Title	Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. Commissioner of Health 	Health Department <u>MEMO</u>	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 East Fayette Street		
	Subject	Council Bill 08-0070R- Informational Hearing – Vector Control		

To: President and Members
of the City Council
c/o
409 City Hall




November 19, 2008

The Baltimore City Health Department is pleased to submit comments in response City Council Bill 08-0070R. The purpose of the bill is to request the Commissioner of the Health Department, the Director of the Bureau of Vector Control, and the members of the Interagency Sweep Team to brief the City Council on the effectiveness of Vector Control Bureau activity in controlling the rat population in City neighborhoods, the success of outreach efforts in enlisting the citizenry in rat eradication efforts, the methods used to measure the efficacy of rat control and abatement efforts, and the level of coordinated, rat-density based, interagency strategic coordination and application for long-term control of the rodent population.






In 2004, vector control responsibilities were transferred from the Department of Public Works to the Baltimore City Health Department. Since then, the Health Department has developed a streamlined operations model to facilitate interagency collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), Department of Public Works (DPW), and Bureau of Vector Control to control trash and rodent infestations.

The key objective is to integrate rodent population reduction initiatives with environmental management and community participation. If trash containment behavior changes among our citizens occur, rodent populations can be managed to reduce breeding capacity. The City's current focus is reactive and uses chemical control techniques in conjunction with trash removal strategies. In addition to baiting, Rat Rub Out will re-focus efforts to include an aggressive pro-active or "prevention" component with effective participation of residents, home owners, commercial establishments and government in a series of comprehensive clean sweeps in Safe zones and other "Hot Spot" neighborhoods. The program will use three programmatic modules to control the rodent population, as follows:

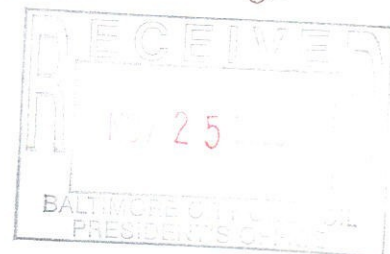
The Three Program Modules

-  Baiting
-  Comprehensive Clean Sweeps Task Force
-  Community Education and Training

Major Rodent Infestation Determinants

-  Non-Rodent Proof Structural Design for Residents and Commercial Structures
-  Inadequate trash and waste containment removal by tenants and property owners
-  Illegal dumping of trash, cars, furniture, etc. in alleys and open lots
-  Excessive vacant properties throughout "Hot Spot" communities
-  Lack of knowledge by public about rodent control techniques

Comments



Justification for Public Rodent Control Activity

- ✚ Correlation with Disease Reduction (asthma, allergies, etc)
- ✚ Reduced Property Damage
- ✚ Increased Property Values
- ✚ Improved Citizen Living Conditions

Actions Steps

Strengthen laws that require compliance and abatement access (local legislation that allows entry for DPW and EH to treat a whole block or neighborhood)

- ✚ Utilize existing community coalitions to assist with compliance, ensure community understands risks, trusts the program and supports the initiative
- ✚ Identify highest risk neighborhoods and implement “Neighborhood Sweeps
- ✚ Educate individuals, community organizations, school children and food operators through structure workshops and seminars
- ✚ Supply targeted communities with “rat-proof” garbage cans with attached lids
- ✚ Develop demonstration project in a community using the “Super Cart” system of ninety (90) gallon trash cans
- ✚ Research project to document impact and transmission of rodent borne disease on children

Rodent Control Services

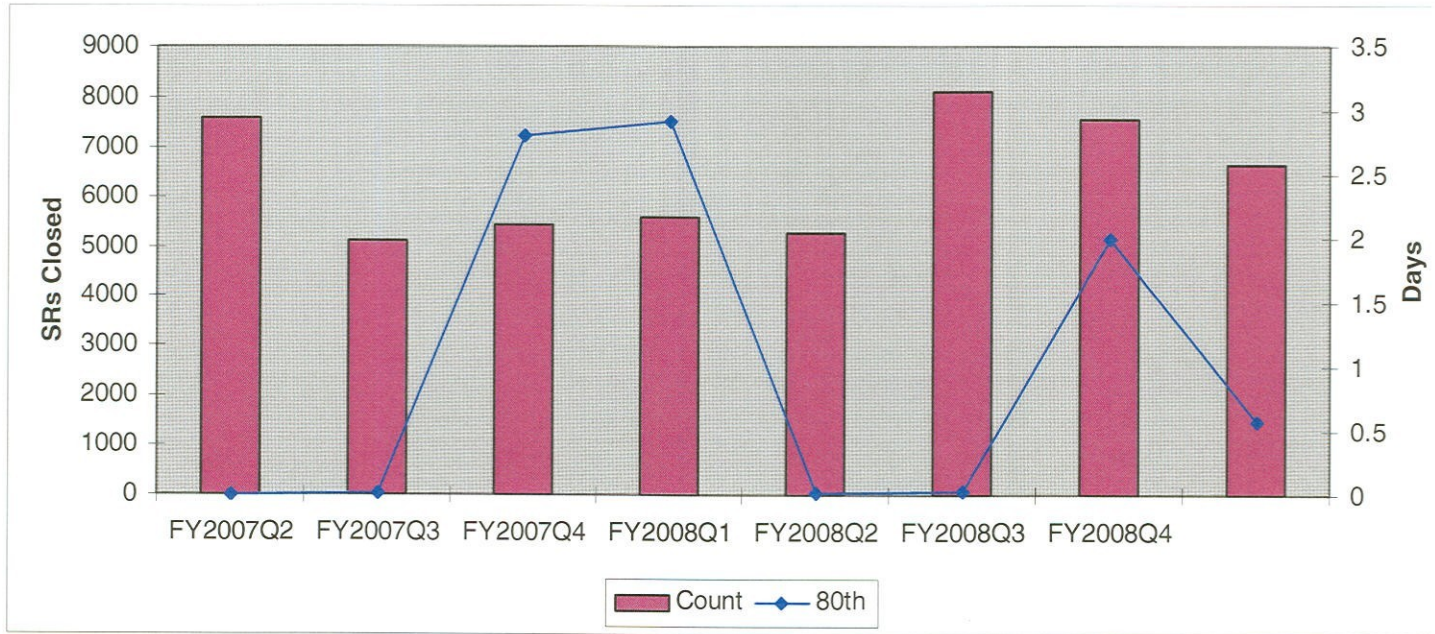
Over the past 4 years, Vector Control has provided more than 73,000 services in more than 200 communities in Baltimore City.

Through the 311 system, we are able to respond to complaints in a timely manner and keep track of data related to the calls. 97.9% of all cases are closed in less than 2 weeks, and the majority are closed within 6 days. In addition, we have adopted a more aggressive proactive inspection and baiting strategy – 64% of our services are proactive.

Coordination with other agencies is critical. The Health Department cannot bait a property unless it is clean. DPW Solid Waste has done an excellent job for cleaning vacant properties, alleys and public areas. Likewise, Housing Code Enforcement has enhanced citizen compliance with city codes to reduce food and habitat for rodents.

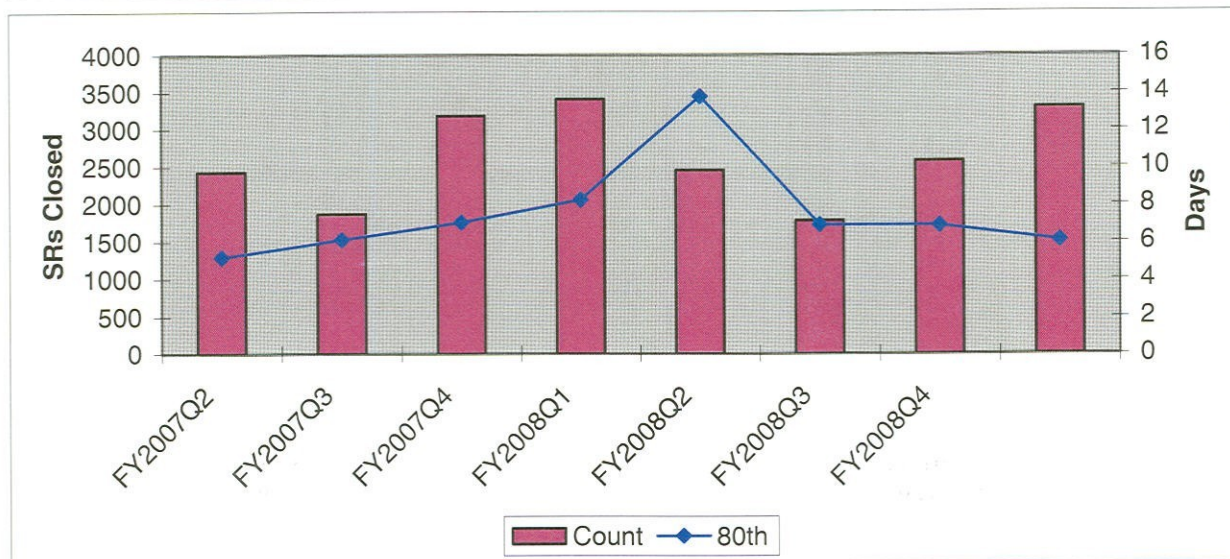
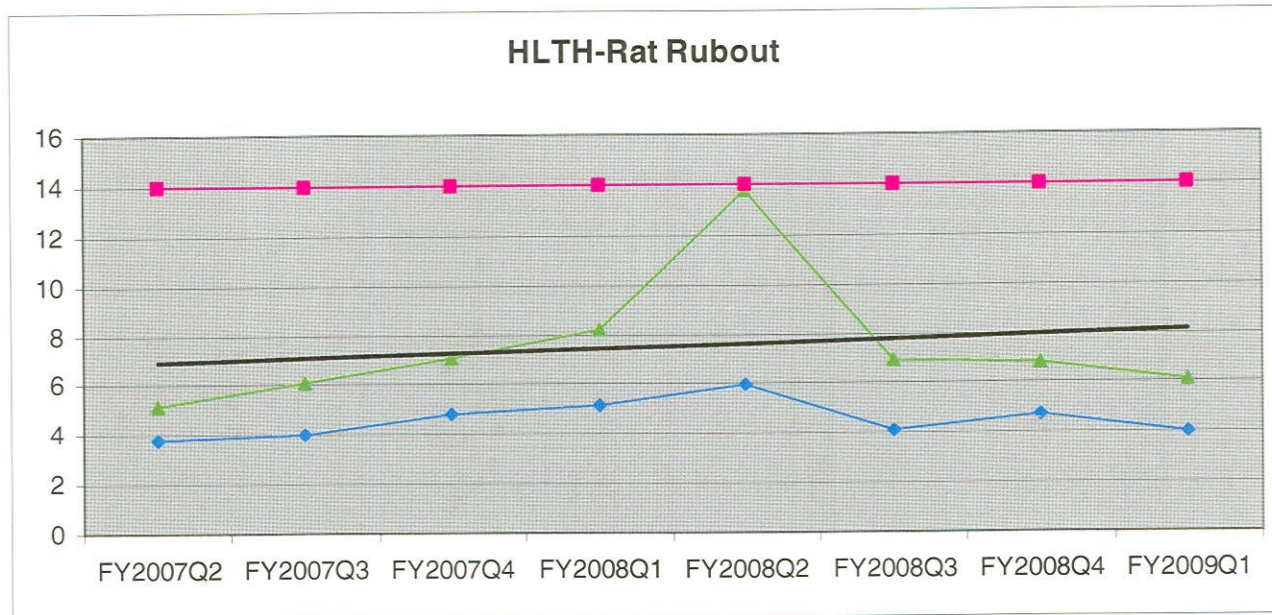
Vector Control Data for Proactive Inspection Services

SR		Start	End	Count	Min	Max	Mean	Median	80th	90th
HLTH-Rat										
Rubout -										
Proactive	All	10/01/2006	09/30/2008	51263	0	163.03	1.6	0	0.52	3.08
	FY2007Q2	10/01/2006	12/31/2006	7610	0	37.21	0.42	0	0	1.78
	FY2007Q3	01/01/2007	03/31/2007	5100	0	12.06	0.56	0	0.01	2.74
	FY2007Q4	04/01/2007	06/30/2007	5406	0	15.06	1.18	0.01	2.81	3.94
	FY2008Q1	07/01/2007	09/30/2007	5591	0	79.02	2.55	0.01	2.92	5.73
	FY2008Q2	10/01/2007	12/31/2007	5275	0	36.79	0.14	0	0.01	0.02
	FY2008Q3	01/01/2008	03/31/2008	8104	0	163.03	5.12	0	0.03	10
	FY2008Q4	04/01/2008	06/30/2008	7557	0	26.04	1.38	0.01	2	4.13
	FY2009Q1	07/01/2008	09/30/2008	6620	0	10.09	0.44	0.01	0.58	1.02
		07/01/2001	06/30/2003	63	0	137.78	21.38	13.75	37.99	50.99



Vector Control Data for 311 Service Request

SR		Start	End	Count	Min	Max	Mean	Median	80th	90th
HLTH-Rat Rubout	All	10/01/2006	09/30/2008	20972	0	85.95	5.5	4.69	7.02	9.71
	FY2007Q2	10/01/2006	12/31/2006	2430	0	18.81	3.89	3.76	5.18	6.87
	FY2007Q3	01/01/2007	03/31/2007	1866	0	22	4.64	4.06	6.13	7.97
	FY2007Q4	04/01/2007	06/30/2007	3178	0	18.86	5	4.8	7.05	8.92
	FY2008Q1	07/01/2007	09/30/2007	3403	0	32.76	6.11	5.11	8.23	11.17
	FY2008Q2	10/01/2007	12/31/2007	2449	0	85.95	9	5.97	13.73	22.21
	FY2008Q3	01/01/2008	03/31/2008	1779	0	26.18	5.49	4.14	6.88	11.15
	FY2008Q4	04/01/2008	06/30/2008	2575	0	26.04	5.06	4.77	6.86	8.07
	FY2009Q1	07/01/2008	09/30/2008	3292	0.01	29.66	4.77	4.06	6.08	7.91
		07/01/2001	06/30/2003	63	0	137.78	21.38	13.75	37.99	50.99



Interagency Sweep Team

Baltimore City has established a comprehensive rodent control initiative known as the Interagency Sweep Team. The Interagency Sweep Team consists of (1) Rodent Control, which is centralized in the Health Department, (2) Housing Inspection and Property Maintenance, which are a part of Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and (3) Sanitation Police and Solid Waste, which are within the Department of Public Works (DPW).

This interagency collaborative effort in the fight against rodent infestation is successful. The underlying cause of the City's rodent problem is the availability of food and shelter. Properties need to be free of trash and debris, high grass and weeds, unused materials, such as lumber and boxes, and abandoned vehicles. Treating and baiting a property that is unclean is ineffective.

DHCD and DPW have the enforcement power to ensure that properties and certain areas are free of rat harborage, so that baiting will be more effective. During the Sweep, HCD and/or DPW will cleared certain problem properties or alleys prior to a visit from Vector Control.

Once a property is cleaned, Vector Control is immediately notified and a Pest Control Worker investigates within five days. The Interagency Sweep Team has been successful in its fight against rodents because it not only addresses the immediate problem, rats, but also the factors that cause the infestation.