

Rat infestation at headquarters

By Darcel Choy, May 17 2016, Port of Spain

FIRE officers stationed at the Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, fire headquarters are calling on Chief Fire Officer Roosevelt Bruce to deal with a rat infestation in their dormitories.

Head of the Fire Service Association, Leo Ramkissoon, claimed rats were nesting in the male fire fighters dormitory and the fire sub-officers quarters where uniforms and personal items are stored.

He said the officers took a decision to stay away from the area until it was sanitised and steps were taken to ensure the rats do not return.

“They (officers) are sitting around the station in areas deemed a little safer.

They still have to report for duty.

However, they are still in their civilian clothing because they are not able to access their fire uniforms and kits,” he said.

He claimed that in one instance, the rats shredded one officer’s uniform to make their nest.

The decision by the firefighters has forced senior officers to utilise other personnel to man the fire trucks, according to Ramkissoon.

“That move will have negative effects because the personnel they have taken serve in important sections including the fire prevention section, administrative, engineering and accounting,” he said. Ramkissoon said they were hoping the issue is addressed as quickly as possible.

“The association as well as the fire officers who we represent are ready and willing to assist in any way we can to assist the situation to bring it to full operation once again,” he said.

When contacted, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Kenny Gopaul said a health inspector visited the area yesterday and saw no signs of a rat infestation.

“There were no rats, they went on a vacation today (yesterday),” he said.

Despite this, Gopaul said a company was brought in to clean the place and sanitise the area.

Asked about pictures showing a shredded uniform, he said, “That is a uniform belonging to one officer who has not used it in a very long time.” Commenting on the use of other staff he said, “The public deserves a service and under the OSH Act the fire officers are not allowed to

withhold the service. I told Mr Ramkissoon this and he did nothing about it and there are going to be ramifications.”