

Why control pests?

Pests play an important role in the spread of bacteria and disease and can cause contamination to both food and food contact surfaces. Pests in a food premises include flies, cockroaches, ants, mice and rats.

How do pests contaminate food?

Pests contaminate food and food contact surfaces in the following ways:

- Physically, by getting into the food supply themselves or leaving droppings, limbs or hair behind (e.g. finding rat droppings or a dead cockroach in your sausage roll);
- By using their body parts (e.g. feet and feelers) to transfer pathogens from other places, such as the sewer and rubbish piles where flies generally harbour, onto food and food surfaces.

How do you control pests?

1. **Build them out** - your food premises should be constructed and maintained in such a manner that there are no cracks or crevices in walls, floors, benches etc that can allow pest ingress and egress or that will create harbourage areas. Remember a mouse can fit through a hole the width of a biro. All windows and entrances should be well screened to prevent pests entering premises. (It is no use having a screen door if it is always left open.) The use of air curtains in entrances open to the public eg at the front of the store, can also assist with controlling ingress of flying pests.
2. **Starve them out** - your food premises should be thoroughly cleaned every day to ensure there is no food lying around for them to eat. This includes the removal of unnecessary cardboard boxes as these not only provide excellent harbourage but also doubles as a food source. All food items should be stored in well sealed containers in dry storage areas. If flour and other loose food items are to be stored in bulk containers the lid needs to be close fitting and kept on when the food is not being used. It is also important to ensure that bins are emptied at least every day or when full. If external bins (either wheelie bins or skips) are overfull they will attract pests to your food premises which will require you to be extra diligent in maintaining your premises to keep it free from pests. For this reason it is important to ensure all bins are emptied regularly.
3. **Drive them out** - use a licensed pest controller to assist in controlling pests in the food premises. It is recommended that you have a pest controller treat your premises at least every 6 months. It is important that pest control is not done by the use of bombs or by fly spray as every surface that comes into contact with the fly spray or chemical from the bomb must be wiped down and cleaned thereby removing any trace of chemical that could control pests. This method also has the potential of causing chemical contamination of any food that is exposed to the spray.

** Bug zappers should only be used in areas away from food preparation.*

Pest Control Important Points

- Pests play an important role in the spread of bacteria and disease and can cause contamination to both food and food contact surfaces.
- Pests contaminate food in 2 ways – physically by ending up in the food or by transferring pathogens.
- Pests can be controlled in 3 ways, by:
 - building them out – ensure all openings are screened and cracks and crevices filled in
 - starving them out – ensure all food is covered, and all areas are clean so there is no food source
 - driving them out – use a licensed pest controller to treat your premises at least every 6 months

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