

How to Run a Healthy Business

Pest Control

It is vital in food businesses that pests are kept out of food preparation and handling areas. Flies, cockroaches, ants, rats and mice all carry bacteria which can contaminate food.

They travel freely from disease ridden environments such as drains and sewers, to food preparation areas. They contaminate the food and expose customers to the dangers of food poisoning and serious illness, that may even result in death.

In a food business, the sight of any pest alerts your customers to low standards of hygiene that may turn them away.

The presence of pests may also mean that you will need to throw out large quantities of contaminated food and/or carry out an extermination program.

It is important that staff keep a look out on a daily basis for evidence of pest activity.

Flies

Flies do not have teeth to consume solid food so they vomit onto food to moisten it before eating. Flies carry food poisoning bacteria on their wings, legs, bodies and faeces.

Cockroaches

Cockroaches are night insects. During the day, cockroaches rest in warm, moist and dark areas like sewers, cracks, under refrigerators and behind stoves. They carry food poisoning bacteria on their legs, bodies, hairs and faeces.

Ants

Ants are attracted to almost any food, and although the amount eaten is generally small, the food becomes contaminated and inedible once ants have infested it. They may carry disease bacteria like those causing dysentery and salmonella.

Rats and Mice

Rats and mice carry bacteria including those that cause typhus, salmonella and ringworm. They spread disease by feeding and urinating on stored products, and contaminate food with their droppings.

Rats and mice have poor sight, but excellent senses of smell and taste. They can jump as well as climb up pipes, walls and shelving. Their large teeth allow them to gnaw through lead, aluminium, cardboard and wood. They may also chew on electrical cables, causing fires.

Preventative Measures

- Keep all food preparation and storage areas clean.
- If food is spilled, clean it up immediately.
- Store food in glass or heavy plastic containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Make sure scraps of food are not left on the floor, shelves or preparation areas to attract pests.
- Do not allow food scraps to enter drains.
- Clean grease traps and drains regularly.
- Do not leave dirty dishes and utensils on the sink overnight.
- Regularly empty, clean and sanitise garbage bins and garbage areas.
- Electronic insect killers can also be used, if installed away from food preparation and handling areas.
- Seal cracks and crevices around windows, doors, tiles, vents, walls and service pipe entry points.
- Install fly-proofing on all external doors and windows including:
 - fly strips;
 - air curtains;
 - self closing doors; and
 - fly screens to windows.



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Please Turn Over

- Inspect all food deliveries for signs of infestation, including damaged packaging, droppings, contamination and gnawing marks.
- Remove all packaging and cartons from food areas.
- Ensure the area around your premises is clear of wood piles, old machinery, garbage or weeds and other places where pests can nest, hide and breed.

Pest Control Programs

If you have been unable to prevent infestation, it is wise to seek the advice of a professional pest control specialist.

Most specialists provide a free inspection and suggest a strategy to eliminate pests as part of their quotation.

They will provide treatment for the premises to remove the pests and are often able to guarantee against re-infestation.

Typical pest control measures include the use of:

- insect traps
- residual sprays to control crawling insects such as cockroaches and ants
- rodent baits

Any pest control program undertaken by the business itself or resulting from the employment of a pest control specialist must ensure that:

- Baits, sprays, traps do not contaminate food, packaging or equipment
- The location of baits and/or traps is recorded
- The baits/traps are inspected regularly to monitor pest activity
- A record of all pest control activities is documented.

For more information on pest control in your business contact your Environmental Health Officer at the Health Services Branch on 9658 8831 / 8815.