



## Pest Control in Food Premises

A pest is any animal or insect that could contaminate food, either directly or indirectly. Common pests found in food premises include:

- Rodents (mice and rats);
- Insects (eg, cockroaches, flies, ants, weevils etc.);
- Birds (eg pigeons); and
- Spiders.

Pests transmit spoilage and food poisoning micro-organisms, damage food and food packaging and may contaminate food with their bodies, faeces, urine, hair, or feathers.

Due to the nocturnal nature of most pests, contamination of food may go unnoticed for some time until the infestation is large enough for pests to be spotted. It can be very difficult to eliminate large infestations.

Pests generally hide in warm dark places and are commonly found:

- Under, behind and inside electrical appliances and cabling;
- Under, behind and inside cooking appliances, such as deep fryers, gas cookers, wok burners etc.;
- Under sinks and hand washing facilities;
- Under food preparation benches;
- In food and equipment storage areas;
- Inside wall, roof, and floor cavities; and
- Inside cracks and crevices.

**A food business must take all practicable measures to prevent pests from entering your food premises; prevent the harbourage of pests, and eradicating any that do enter.**

Practicable pest-proofing measures include:

- Sealing all holes, gaps and cracks in the walls and ceilings;
- Sealing all openings where pipes and cables pass through walls, floors and ceiling;
- Installing and maintaining flyscreens to windows and doors;
- Keeping doors closed when not in use.

Practicable eradication and prevent harbourage measures include:

- Regular checks for signs of pests or pest activity, particularly in the areas where they like to hide;
- Sealing all cracks and crevices (no matter how tiny) throughout the food premises, this includes between equipment, benches, tiles, ceilings etc
- Maintaining the premises, storage areas and all equipment in a clean condition;
- Keeping all food covered in sealed containers'
- Removal of all unnecessary or disused equipment from the food premises;
- Storing food and equipment off the floor of storage areas;
- Ensuring rubbish stored in closed containers and regular rubbish removal services;
- Using a licensed pest control operator.

A regular treatment from a professional pest control operator is strongly recommended as they are skilled in the safe application of pesticides in a food premises. In addition, it can help you to demonstrate that you have taken all practicable measures to eradicate and prevent harbourage of pests from the food premises. There is no prescribed frequency for treatment, as this will depend on the individual circumstances relating to the food business.

A licensed pest control operator should provide you with the following:

- A contract, outlining the pests and areas to be treated and the required frequency of treatments;
- Information of what chemicals have been used;
- Written reports of each treatment, outlining pest activity, areas treated, chemicals used, and recommended actions of the proprietor.

