

Controlling Pests

It's important that you keep food safe and protected from pests and harmful microorganisms they can carry. Pests can not only contaminate food but they can also contaminate food contact surfaces and equipment.

Food businesses must take all reasonable measures to prevent entry and harbourage of pests into their food premises and vehicles.

This means ensuring pests are stopped from entering or living in your food premises and pests are eradicated from your premises and vehicles used to transport food.

Food businesses should be vigilant and regularly check for signs of pests in their premises.

Type of Pests

Common pests that can be found in food premises include:

- Rodents (e.g. rats and mice)
- Insects (e.g. cockroaches, flies and ants)
- Birds (e.g. pigeons)



Rats and mice carry obvious health risks from their droppings and constant incontinence. They may directly contaminate food equipment within the premises as well as causing damage to the premises and equipment by gnawing. Look out for signs of rats and mice in the kitchen:

- Mice can leave up to 50-80 droppings a night
- Mice leave dirty grey smudges or grease marks on walls and skirting boards. They travel close to walls and fur rubs against these surfaces.

- Mice have a strong smell from urination.
- Mice chew and gnaw on wood, plastic and cables.
- You can leave out flour or talcum powder around walls and skirting boards and check in the morning if it has been disturbed.



Cockroaches are known carriers of disease. The German cockroach is the most common cockroach found in commercial kitchens. The German cockroach breeds so rapidly, one egg capsule carried into a food premises may lead to an infestation of 20,000 cockroaches within a year. They will physically contaminate food from their dropping, dead bodies and discarded skin casings. Look out for signs of cockroaches:

- They shed cast nymphal skins 5-8 times as they mature to adults
- They leave dust of black droppings less than 1mm wide and varying lengths
- If water is abundant, they will leave brown and irregular shaped smear marks on horizontal surfaces and wall-floor junctions
- They leave a lingering and unusual musty smell.

Birds lead to health nuisances as they may carry bird mites and lice. Droppings also create health problems as they attract cockroaches and/or contaminate surfaces.

Flies contaminate food as they carry bacteria on their hairs and feet. They may directly land on food, food preparation surfaces and/or equipment. Flies regurgitate food, leave their droppings behind and may lay maggots.



Preventing pests from entering and harbouring:

- Seal any gaps behind splashbacks of sinks, basins etc.
- Install weather-strips on the bottom of all doors that lead to the external of the premises
- Ensure that no items such as cardboard boxes etc. are left for prolonged periods of time as this provides harbourage for pests
- Seal any gaps in the walls and ceilings
- Seal any gaps in the floors as this can prove hard to clean which can attract pests
- Install flyscreens to windows and door openings
- Keep doors closed when not in use
- Seal any manholes in the ceilings
- Seal any areas where cable, conduits and pipes extrude out in floor, ceilings and walls as much as reasonably possible
- Don't leave any food remains around
- Implement a cleaning schedule
- Remove rubbish daily
- Remove unused equipment and fixtures from the premises which will harbour pests

Also protect food by:

- Keeping food covered in sealed food-grade containers with lids
- Storing food, equipment and food containers above the floor

Pest Management Plan

Council recommends that you engage the services of a licensed pest technician and develop a pest management plan that covers:

- the types of pests and treatments to be used
- areas that need inspection and treatment
- locations of pest control devices and pesticides
- how often inspections and treatments need to be done.

If you preform pest control treatments yourself, make sure that any chemicals or baits used are suitable and approved for use in food premises and do not contaminate food or food contact surfaces.

Records

It's a good idea to keep reports of any pest inspections and treatments done. The report should include dates, type of pest activity, chemicals / controls used and recommended actions. Any recommended actions should be done as soon as you can. You can produce these records during your routine food safety inspection with the Council Environmental Health Officer.

More Information

Visit NSW Food Authority's website:
http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/Documents/retailfactsheets/pest_control.pdf

Alternatively, contact Council and ask to speak with the Environmental Health Officer.