

Maintaining a Pest-free Restaurant

Pests in your restaurant not only harm your customers, affect your staff and damage your restaurant's reputation—they could also expose you to costly litigation and even lead to your facility's closure. Work closely with a pest management professional to take preventive measures against common pests like rodents, flies and cockroaches.

Focus on Hot Spots

Working with a pest control professional, inspect your facility for the places where pests are likely to gain access or reside. When you have found any potential or actual points of infestation, you will be better able to formulate an effective extermination or prevention plan:

- Receiving areas: Cockroaches and other pests often enter restaurants by traveling on shipments or packaging. Take steps to find them before they enter the facility:
 - Consult with vendors to ensure that they have precautions for pest management in place.
 - Inspect shipments for signs of pests such as gnaw marks, droppings or insects.
 - Never move shipments to storage before inspection of both packaging and contents.
 - Use black lights to spot urine and grease marks left by passing rodents
 - Use flashlights to inspect crates, boxes and pallets.
- Storage areas: Storage areas are often pest-ridden because they are low-traffic, damp and dark:
 - Monitor these areas closely for the presence of pests.
 - Eliminate odors, food debris and spillage immediately.
 - Remove products from cardboard packaging as soon as possible—cockroaches feed on the glue found in them.
 - Use tightly-sealed plastic containers to store products.

Pests in your restaurant can harm customers, damage your reputation and lead to costly litigation or even your facility's closure. Taking preventive measures protects you from risk.

- Use open-backed stainless steel shelving, at least 6 inches off the floor and 18 inches from the wall.
- Rotate stock on a first in, first out basis to ensure that no products are left for extended periods.
- Kitchen: Pests in the kitchen are best prevented

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through thorough sanitation:

- Remove excess moisture by promptly repairing leaks in pipes, sinks or dishwashers.
- Clean up spills immediately to prevent food from spreading under equipment to hard-to-reach areas.
- Never leave dishes in the sink overnight.
- Remove trash at least daily.
- Line all trash containers with plastic liner bags.
- Use a safe cleaner around kitchen and floor drains—grease and grime often collect in these areas.

Necessary Documentation

Record all steps you take to rid your facility of pests.

Retain necessary forms, including service records, corrective action reports, pest activity reports, lists of pesticides used and how, and a copy of the pest control operator's license.