

Independent Guide

What do I need to know about pest control?



Independent workplace compliance

Why are pests a problem?

Pests can be divided into three basic groups; rodents, insects and birds. They can enter a building for warmth, shelter or food via deliveries, open doors and windows. Pests can spread diseases, viruses, bacteria, protozoa and parasites via their fur, feet, droppings, urine and saliva.

Pests and the law

The Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 states that all premises must be kept safe and without risks to health. The Food Safety Act 1990 states that it is an offence to sell food which is unfit or contaminated with foreign matter. The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 gives local authorities the power to require landowners and occupiers to control rodent infestations on their land.

Other regulations which need to be considered include:

- The Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006
- The Food Hygiene (Scotland) Regulations 2006
- The Food Hygiene (Wales) Regulations 2006
- The Food Hygiene (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2006
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- The Food and Environment Protection Act 1985
- The Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 and Control of Pesticides (Amendment) Regulations 1997

Fines of up to £20,000 and up to six months in prison can be imposed in a Magistrates Court and unlimited fines and up to two years in prison can be imposed in a Crown Court. More information on rodent control in urban areas can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) information sheet MISC515.

How can you avoid a pest infestation?

- Keep your premises in a good state of repair and in a clean and tidy condition.
- Eliminate gaps and holes in your building, especially around doors and windows, around electrical conduits and around pipework.
- Ensure that drains above and below ground are kept in good repair.
- Keep the perimeter of your building free of vegetation and the buildup of rubbish.
- Ensure that fly screens are fitted over windows if flying pests are a problem.

It should be noted that if a pencil can pass through a gap, then so can a young mouse! If pests gain entry to your building you can control them by:

1. Physical methods.
2. Chemical control.
3. Employment of pest control contractors.

How do you choose a pest control contractor?

The following questions need to be answered:

1. Can the contractor undertake a complete survey and provide a clear report of recommendations and actions required?
2. What pests are covered, the frequency of visits, arrangements for additional treatments and services, including emergency response and preventative measures, and the cost?
3. Is the contractor experienced, are their employees appropriately trained and can they provide references from current clients?
4. Does the contractor have appropriate levels of insurance and can they demonstrate financial viability?
5. Is the contractor a member of the British Pest Control Association?
6. Are all of the methods and materials used approved under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 and Control of Pesticides (Amendment) Regulations 1997?

This guide is of a general nature; specific advice can be obtained from Assurity Consulting. Assurity Consulting is the UK's leading independent compliance consultancy specialising in workplace health, safety and environmental solutions. We have over 30 years' experience of helping customers of all sizes, from across all sectors, manage their compliance responsibilities, making sure that their organisation is compliant, their employees are safe, their processes are cost effective and their management team is in control.



Assurity Consulting Limited

26 Redkirk Way Horsham West Sussex RH13 5QH

t +44 (0)1403 269375 e info@assurityconsulting.co.uk

w assurityconsulting.co.uk

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