

Pest Management in Restaurants

Management has options when it comes to a pest-free kitchen

by *Dr. Anil Menon*

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In any facility where food is handled and stored, proper pest management is critical to operating a safe, clean and regulatory-compliant business. If there is food, there is a risk of infestation, and restaurant employees need to be aware of these risks and their options for prevention and treatment.

Pest management is often challenging in a restaurant setting as a result of various factors: the abundance of food, ideal moisture and temperature conditions, extended business hours and various pest harborage sites. Pest management can prove especially challenging for 24-hour restaurants because the kitchen does not have adequate time to prepare for regular pest treatments. It is likely the restaurant will need to close for a period of time to allow for the treatment to be completed, as only specific products are approved for use during operating hours. In other cases, pest professionals will work late at night or very early in the morning to accommodate business hours, since technicians prefer to treat for pests after the kitchen has been cleaned in order to maximize the effectiveness of the treatment applications. In the face of so many challenges, it is vital for restaurant personnel to collaborate with pest professionals in order to develop a successful and effective relationship and treatment program. Additionally, management should be advised that heat, moisture, steam and grease—factors that are outside the control of pest professionals—tend to reduce the effectiveness of products used in pest control.

Restaurants face four chief pest concerns: cockroaches, flies, stored product pests and rodents. While rodents are dreaded among restaurant management, the visibility of any pest can hinder a restaurant's business. Thus, it is necessary for personnel to prevent pest access to the facility and not allow them to establish themselves inside by denying them food, water and shelter.

Threats to food safety exist both indoors and outdoors and it is essential for restaurant managers to be familiar with their eatery's pest "hot spots": areas where conditions conducive to infestation are commonly found. While specific hot spots can vary from restaurant to restaurant, there are general areas of any structure that require special attention to ensure a pest-free environment.

Waste Storage: The most common outdoor hot spots develop in the dumpster areas due to improper garbage storage and disposal, as inadequate waste management

systems are often overlooked. Any food debris that is left behind will accumulate and become the perfect food source for disease-carrying pests.

Entrance and Exit Points: The easiest mistake an employee can make is to leave kitchen doors open. This is literally inviting pests to come in! Using air curtains outside main entryways and fixing missing or torn window screens will keep flies and other flying insects from entering the restaurant.

Outdoor Lighting Fixtures: Proper outdoor lighting is important because pests are attracted to light. Lastly, employees must be aware of neighboring facilities. A neighbor's unsanitary behavior can lead to pest problems, as pests will travel from facility to facility.

Cleaning Supply Storage: Proper mop storage is critical. Mops should be hung clean and allowed to dry in a closet away from food preparation areas. Employees should never leave mops moist, as the moisture creates a perfect breeding site for flies.

Proper Sanitation & Maintenance: Kitchen equipment should not only be clean, but sanitized. It is a common misconception that clean means sanitized. To clean is to simply remove dirt or debris, whereas sanitizing actually removes surface bacteria and microorganisms. Dirty floor drains should be cleaned regularly to prevent fly infestations, and missing or broken wall and floor tiles should be replaced immediately. Preventative steps also include inspecting all incoming inventory and maintaining stock through the "first in, first out" method.

Even the most rigorous inspection and maintenance practices are sometimes not enough to keep the bugs at bay. Scientific advancements in professional pest management are delivering new products to the marketplace that can be used to supplement any integrated pest management program. Versatility is key in this area because all pest issues are different. To develop the most effective treatment program, restaurant personnel should work with contracted pest professionals to choose from bait systems, undetectable liquid insecticides, or insect growth regulators (IGR's).

Baits are often used to treat for cockroach and ant infestations and can be positioned deep inside cracks, crevices and wall voids. Roaches ingest the bait then return to their hiding places and die. There is also secondary kill when other roaches take up the bait by feeding on the dying insects or their excretions. Because baits have been a standard method of cockroach control for many years, roaches are showing aversion to formulations of some popular bait products. In order to fight this physiological and behavioral aversion, pest control professionals suggest rotating the use of baits with liquid treatments every few months.

When it comes to residual insecticides, there are many options for repellent and nonrepellent products. Undetectable liquid insecticides are the newest technology available to help in the fight against pests. These nonrepellent insecticides can be applied as crack, crevice or spot treatments inside and outside of the restaurant. The

treatments are undetectable to the insects, so pests unknowingly contact or ingest the active ingredient. In some cases, the pests may return to their nests or colonies and share the active ingredient with nestmates. Additional pests may then be controlled by the broad activity provided by the undetectable liquid treatments. Undetectable liquids help resolve bait aversion and the pests are actually eliminated, whereas other repellent liquid treatments simply ward off insects from the treated area. To be most effective there is a need to use dedicated application equipment for non-repellent products. This avoids cross contamination of repellent and non-repellent products.

Insect growth regulators (IGR's) are products that interrupt or inhibit the development of a pest. Hydroprene and pyriproxyfen are the active ingredients in some of the industry's top IGR's. These products hamper the life cycles of roaches, flies and stored product pests by effecting their growth and reproduction. The advantage to IGR's is their ability to be used in conjunction with non-repellent insecticides and baiting systems.

Thorough inspections, regular maintenance and proper sanitation of pest control "hot spots" should be standard practice for all restaurants. Combined with a comprehensive knowledge of professional pest management treatment options, these skills and practices will ensure management can focus on the business of running a successful, pest-free food service establishment.

An innovation in undetectable ant, roach and stored product pest control



While there are many options for treating restaurant kitchens, the advanced technology of undetectable liquid treatments is making an impact on pest professionals and integrated pest management programs. The versatility of these products is a true benefit for the restaurant community.

Labeled by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2005 for use in food handling applications, Phantom® termiticide-insecticide from BASF, The Chemical Company, offers an effective method for controlling ants, cockroaches and stored product pests such as flour beetles and saw toothed grain beetles. Phantom's active ingredient, chlorfenapyr, makes it completely undetectable, meaning pests can't taste it, smell it, or avoid it. Once ingested, Phantom attacks pests by preventing their cells from generating energy. This leads to paralysis, and ultimately, death. However, the process is not immediate. Unlike faster acting products, Phantom will not cause an

accumulation of dead ants and cockroaches in a particular location. This may signal to other pests to avoid that area, which in turn undermines the success of the treatment.

Phantom delivers impressive control when used alone or in conjunction with existing pest control programs, including baits. Benefits include its low-residue formulation, its low human hazard, long residual and the ability to target applications to vulnerable cracks and crevices, drains and selected spots.

For best results, Phantom should be applied by a pest professional following a comprehensive inspection of the restaurant's susceptible areas. (Always read and follow label directions. Phantom is a registered trademark and the Phantom logo is a trademark of BASF. Phantom is not registered for cockroach control in California. Check with your local BASF sales specialist regarding state approval.) To learn more about Phantom, please visit www.pestcontrolfacts.com.