



# City of Westminster

## Pest Information

### PREVENTION OF PEST PROBLEMS

Rather than having to control pest problems once they arise, care in the design, structure and layout of buildings can prevent such problems beginning. Buildings which are inaccessible or unattractive to pests will prevent infestation, which is especially important in the food industry. Pests in food premises are a source of contamination, spread disease, and damage food and property.

Good housekeeping measures, such as prevention of access, stock rotation, proofing, covering food, and cleaning schedules, will help prevent infestation. As part of a due diligence defence in any food premises, it will be necessary to demonstrate that preventive measures are part of a documented pest control system rather than relying only on reactive measures. Efficient management, good warehouse practice, inspection and cleaning systems and record keeping will prevent many pest problems arising. It's important to ensure that all areas are routinely inspected as little used rooms provide undisturbed harbourage for pests. Staff areas where food may be consumed are particularly susceptible to food debris.

Proper training of staff to identify signs of infestation is essential. One person should be responsible and accurate records maintained. A Pest Control Manual should be kept containing records of inspections and treatments and details of each sighting of pests or evidence of pests, such as tracks or webbing

#### PROOFING

##### **INSECT AND RODENT PROOFING**

Proofing means the denial of access around doors, windows, pipes, drains, etc., the blocking of holes, and the placing of grids, screens or nets or the installation of air curtains to prevent the entry of pests or their passage from one part of a building to another. Inspection of the building fabric should be carried out as a routine procedure and any damage repaired immediately in order to maintain a smooth, crack free surface.

Holes made or used by rodents should be filled. In order to prevent rodents re-opening holes before the filling has set, wire can be plugged into the holes to support a concrete mix. Metal sheeting should be applied to prevent or repair rodent damage at the junctions of wooden walls, floors and ceilings. On doors the sheet should be applied on both sides and fit snugly round the edge of the door and to the hinge on the other side.

Full grown mice and small rats can pass through a space approximately ½" wide and a small mouse will pass through a crack little more than 1/4" wide. Where wire mesh is used the maximum gauge to exclude mice is ¼" and to exclude houseflies 1/8".

#### **BIRDS**

Birds contaminate food with their droppings and feathers and from the flies and other insects which are carried on their bodies or breed in their nests. Birds can be discouraged by the erection of netting, plastic strips, or air curtains. Proofing of external ledges of buildings can be used to discourage roosting.

#### **WEATHER PROOFING AND INSULATION**

It is important to arrange immediate repair of broken windows, damaged roofs and doors, and for over-all waterproofing to be maintained. Stores should be insulated against heat and damp and service pipes should be insulated.

Insulation materials provide good nesting material for mice and cockroaches and are susceptible to infestation, particularly if they have deteriorated and are breaking up. It is therefore important to inspect and maintain insulation in a good condition.

#### **BUILDING DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE**

**FIRE ESCAPES** often provide ready access to buildings for rodents and insects. Doors must be checked to ensure tight fitting and measures taken to ensure emergency doors are not left open for ventilation.

**INTAKE CONVEYORS AND ELEVATORS** also provide easy entry from a yard or ground floor into the premises. Wherever possible the base of such equipment should be surrounded by a smooth metal fence of sufficient height with tight fitting doors or flaps at the entry port.

**LIFT SHAFTS** are often centres of infestation. The interior surfaces are usually rough and have numerous nooks and crannies which provide harbourage for insects and rodents. Debris allowed to accumulate in the well of the lift shaft provides a source of nesting and food material. Rodents can easily climb the cables, rails and pipes inside lift shafts and they may nest in the motor housing.

**ROLLER SHUTTERS** provide footholds for rodents in the interlocking sections and give easy climbing access. The shutter box at the top provides a nesting area and it is difficult to proof the whole area except by a separate cage door constructed around it.

**OTHER OPENINGS** such as doors, windows, fan vents, air bricks and hoist apertures provide entry to premises and should be inspected and maintained. Adjacent drain pipes, trees and other potential routes should be removed or shielded to prevent access, or the openings should be screened.

#### **WATER- PLUMBING AND DRAINAGE SERVICES**

Control of infestation by rodents can be improved by denying them access to water. Sources of water include WC. Cisterns, sinks, washbasins, dripping taps, guttering, iced pipes and condensation points, puddles and other sources resulting from bad weather-proofing, cleaning or manufacturing activities. Good building maintenance and cleaning will help control such problems. Points at which pipes, drains, cables and ducts enter and leave buildings should be completely sealed to deny access to insect and rodent pests. Drains should be maintained in good repair, and be properly trapped and interceptors capped so that sewer rats cannot obtain entry. Open gullies must be fitted with an effective grating and a frequent cleaning schedule enforced to ensure flies do not breed in trapped debris. They should be thoroughly cleaned using hot water and steam at least once a week. Faults, smells and overflows should be reported immediately and dealt with.

#### **MACHINERY-FIXTURES AND FITTINGS**

The installation of new machinery and equipment should allow clear floor space beneath and without base cavities and dead space of all kinds at or above ground level. The feet and legs of machinery should be designed so as not to be hollow. Storage cabinets should be constructed without false bottoms. Fixtures and equipment should be raised at least 20-25 cm from the floor on stick legs. This will allow cleaning and prevent the accumulation of debris and dirt thus reducing harbourage for pests. In most food machinery access is often difficult in or under the machine where spillage quickly deteriorates. Access for cleaning all parts where debris accumulates should be provided regularly and not just as part of a major overhaul to be undertaken when time permits.

#### **VOIDS**

Floor, wall and ceiling cavities, roof voids, pipe chases and conduits, tank housing and inaccessible areas behind equipment are frequently used by pests, particularly mice. They provide nesting areas in which breeding and foraging for food can take place.

Careful planning before covering any surface with another and before installing any new item of equipment is necessary to prevent another inaccessible cavity being created. If cavities cannot be sealed solid, they should be provided with adequate inspection panels of good size.

## **HOUSEKEEPING**

### **WAREHOUSING. STORAGE AND STACKING**

Storage space should be designed to allow adequate access, lighting and ventilation. Cramped conditions will make management more difficult and prevent correct cleaning and inspection. Space should be allocated prior to deliveries so that it can be cleared, cleaned and inspected. A stacking plan should leave clear space around each stack for cleaning and inspection. Produce should be kept clear of doors, windows and ventilators, walls or corners. They should be accessible for fumigation or isolation in the case of emergencies. Corners and wall floor angles should be painted white to encourage effective cleaning where residues accumulate.

Different classes of goods should be separately stored especially those susceptible to infestation. This will limit the spread of any infestation. In food manufacture, all raw materials, packaging materials and finished products should be separately stored. Stock rotation helps prevent the build up of old stock and makes checking and cleaning easier. Stock rotation also prevents pests becoming established with the age of the stock. Wooden and metal pallets moved by forklift truck can be a source of infestation and cross infestation. These should be regularly inspected and cleaned

## **MANAGEMENT**

### **IN-COMING GOODS**

Suppliers can come from several different sources over which you may have less control than at your own premises. Suppliers are a potential source of infestation and cross contamination with a potential to distribute pests on a wide basis.

The vehicles and containers in which edible goods are delivered and those which remove returns and waste can become infested and a source of cross infestation. Incoming goods should be inspected and any that shows signs of infestation should be rejected. Delivery inspection records should be maintained and suppliers should be required to provide evidence of their pest control precautions.

### **CLEANING AND HYGIENE**

Cleaning is extremely important to preventive pest control and to the requirements of law. Cleaners should be trained and motivated and equipped with appropriate efficient equipment. Cleaning and the application of rodenticides and insecticides need careful co-ordination and training. Regular cleaning and inspection should be part of the pest control programme especially in food premises. Sweeping and washing and the use of high pressure water and steam jets lead to the loss or deterioration of rodent baits and the removal or breakdown of insecticide films.

### **DUST CONTROL**

Dust accumulated on horizontal surfaces and overhead ledges, pipes, etc., will provide insect pests with food, harbourage and protection from insecticidal treatment. Dust control is also important from a safety viewpoint and in manufacturing premises which produce large quantities of dust it may be advisable to install extraction plant.

### **WASTE AND WASTE REMOVAL**

Containers such as tins, bottles, drums, barrels, etc. should be washed out before disposal to prevent attraction of pests to the residues in the containers. Waste should be sorted into categories, if practicable, and kept segregated from the main activity of the premises. Different classes of waste should be placed in labelled bins or given different colour lids. Refuse bins must be regularly washed. Flies are often found breeding in bins which are only emptied daily. Adequate refuse bins must be provided and kept in good repair and cleanliness. It may be necessary to establish a number of refuse sites within the premises. Bins should be removed to the refuse compound as frequently as possible. They must have tight fitting lids to prevent scavenging or attraction to flies. Special containers or baling systems may be recommended for manufacturing premises which produce large amounts of bulky or salvageable refuse like paper or tins. The refuse compound should be constructed to allow cleaning after each refuse collection.

### **TEMPERATURE**

Food quality is maintained by fresh air and temperature control. Temperature control affects pest infestation for both rodents and insects. Insects multiply rapidly under warm conditions and rodents are attracted to warm conditions. However even temperatures below freezing will not prevent infestation and mice are commonly found in cold stores.

### **LIGHT SOURCES**

Many insects are attracted by light. This may create potential contamination problems particularly if windows and doors are left open during night work. Vents, windows and doors should be screened with metal or plastic mesh and electronic insect killers and insecticides will give additional protection.

## **EXTERNAL AREAS**

Surrounding waste ground and storage yards should be kept tidy and clean to prevent harbourage by rodents. Goods stored in external areas should be inspected for infestation on a routine basis. Permanent weather-proof baiting points should be provided. Disused buildings, railway embankments, canal banks, rubbish tips, heaps of ashes, old vehicles also provide harbourage for pests and should be regularly inspected. Neighbouring sites have a common interest in preventative pest control. Co-operation between neighbours can enhance a pest control programme.

## **SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT**

Weed control reduces the attraction to rodents and reduces fire risk. Treatment carried out between January and March on any adjacent unused land will control growth for the rest of the year and thereby remove harbourage for rodents and insects.

### **Failing to report a pest infestation is not wise**

Pest infestations do not disappear of their own accord. If you believe you have an infestation in your property please contact City of Westminster Council Pest Control Team to arrange an appointment for our officer to call

### **Where can I get help with regards to proofing?**

City of Westminster Council provides a service via its in house pest control team for proofing against pests in domestic properties. Fully trained officers will survey the property and then carryout the required measures in the most appropriate locations.

### **How can I make an appointment?**

To arrange an appointment for an officer to visit your property please telephone  
City of Westminster Council Customer Service Initiative on: **FREEPHONE 0800 3580514**