

A photograph of a commercial kitchen with stainless steel counters, sinks, and equipment. The lighting is bright, and the scene is clean and organized.

PEST MANAGEMENT IN FOOD PREMISES

Nowhere else is pest management more important than in a food premises. The potential of spreading food borne illnesses increases as hygiene standards lower and pest activity increases.

All local governments in Australia undertake health inspections of food premises. Until 2010 only NSW published premises that were issued Penalty Notices or Prosecutions against the Food Regulations. That is all about to change. During 2010 most States announced the development of a 'scores on doors' policy for all food premises.

Pests such as cockroaches, flies and rodents may visit unhygienic places such as sewers and rotting organic matter and then access food preparation areas. They may carry and transmit diseases such as Salmonella and many other bacteria, worms, viruses and protozoa onto the food or food preparation areas resulting in food poisoning, gastroenteritis, dysentery, hepatitis, typhoid fever, and more.

The purpose of this brochure is to provide you with information on what your pest management technician may do for you and actions you need to undertake to maximise the benefit of their treatment.

PEST MANAGEMENT IN FOOD PREMISES

The social consequences of foodborne disease include both temporary and serious chronic illness and even death. It is estimated that unsafe food is responsible for at least 2 billion illnesses worldwide each year. The cost to the USA from major pathogens causing food borne disease for medical costs and lost productivity is \$35 billion annually. It is estimated that 700,000 people die each year in Asia from food and water borne diseases.

Recent Australian estimates of foodborne illness are 5.4 million cases per year (14,800 cases per day), resulting in 2.1 million days off work, 120,000 hospitalisations and about 120 deaths annually. The cost of foodborne disease is estimated to be \$1.2 billion per year.

Los Angeles commenced a food safety program in 1998 when 57% of food outlets received an 'A' rating. By 2005 the 'A's had risen to 84% and there was a 13% decrease in hospitalisations for food-borne illness.

A 'Scores on doors' (also accessible online) classification of eateries, hotels, supermarkets etc has been in operation in New Zealand since 2002. The rating system commonly used is A, B, D and E. At the end of 2009 there were 5 premises rated A Gold in Auckland Central, a year later there are 26. The rating system includes physical parameters as well as staff training and attitudes and is having a positive impact.

AUSTRALIAN 'NAME AND SHAME'

The NSW Food Authority publishes food premises that have been issued penalty notices in the previous 12 months. There were 1,828 penalty notices issued in the 12 months prior to February 2010 for breaches of the Food Safety Act. Analysis shows there were 1,005 premises issued with penalty notices and 22% of these were for contravention of the Food Standards Code 3.2.2 Clause 24 "Failure to eradicate and prevent harbourage of pests." Non-conformances have decreased from 10% to 5.8% in the first two years of the program.

New South Wales and Brisbane City Council have instigated 'scores on doors' programs. Victoria, South Australia and other Queensland Councils have announced that they will introduce a 'scores on doors' system so customers can readily see the standard of the premises as they approach the premises.

Presented by:



REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD PREMISES

Your food may be the talk of the town, but so also would be a low grading on your door. It is important that your pest management procedures are set in place and followed. Remember, it is not just controlling pests but also removing potential harbourages.

“FAILURE TO ERADICATE AND PREVENT HARBOURAGE OF PESTS.”

This can only be achieved as a joint effort by the pest manager and, even more importantly, the staff of the food premises. Nearly a third of all penalty notices issued in NSW were for unhygienic conditions. Cleaning thoroughly is also the first step in pest management. In the past some food premises used to only contact a pest manager when they saw many cockroaches. Most pest managers will now only treat premises on a regular contract basis because it is now their reputation at risk as well.

It is also important to not allow pests to enter, whether in food or packaging or by access through doors, windows or holes in walls. A mouse can squeeze through a hole the size of your little finger, a rat can fit through a hole if your thumb will fit into it.

Once inside the premises the pest will seek harbourage, food and water. Cockroaches have an aggregation pheromone in their droppings – that is why they cluster together – so sealing potential harbourages, such as the gap between stainless steel and tiles, can be integral to an effective pest management treatment.

Cockroaches and rodents are nocturnal so may build up to large numbers before they are noticed. Flies breed rapidly. It is important any sightings of pests by staff are recorded in a 'pest book', that the pest management technician reads it, inspects the areas thoroughly, notes corrective actions taken and signs it. The frequency of service will vary depending on the type of food premise (risk), the climate, pest activity, hygiene etc and may vary from weekly to bimonthly.

Code of Practice –For Pest Management in the Food Industry in Australia and New Zealand

A collaboration between the Pest Management and Food Industries, the CoP was released in August 2011. It provides a reference document for use by the Pest Management and Food Industries to define Best Practice in managing pests at food premises. The CoP details how a pest management program should be designed, implemented, run and the paperwork trail.

For more information:

Australia and New Zealand Food Safety (ANZFS)
www.foodstandards.gov.au

Food Safety Code 3.2.2

Clause 24 Animals and pests

(1) A food business must –

- (a) subject to paragraph (b), not permit live animals in areas in which food is handled, other than seafood or other fish or shellfish;
- (b) permit an assistance animal only in dining and drinking areas and other areas used by customers;
- (c) take all practicable measures to prevent pests entering the food premises; and

(d) take all practicable measures to eradicate and prevent the harbourage of pests on the food premises and those parts of vehicles that are used to transport food.

(2) In subclause (1), 'assistance animal' means an animal referred to in section 9 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 of the Commonwealth.

Relevant web sites for the States and Territories:

www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au

www.safefood.qld.gov.au

www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety

www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/peh/food_safety

www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/food-index.htm

www.public.health.wa.gov.au/1/50/2/food.pm

www.health.act.gov.au/health-services/public-health/health-protection-service/food-safety

www.health.nt.gov.au/Environmental_Health/Food_Safety/index.aspx

Some Local Governments also provide fact sheets

www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/52488/Fact_Sheet_Pest_Control.pdf

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HELPFUL HINTS

RODENTS

Rodents are masters of concealment. They look for quiet places to nest in such as wall and roof voids, sheds and piles of debris. Baiting is only part of effective rodent management. Your technician may advise areas that should be cleaned-up. Please follow this advice to reduce the potential of rodents being attracted to your property. Maintenance should include sanitation – a general tidy up including mowing, especially around nearby water sources, and removal of food, water and harbourages.

COCKROACHES

The German cockroach is the most common pest in food premises; it thrives in areas that provide shelter (hollows inside cracks), warmth, food and water. It reaches maturity in as little as 40 days and each egg case contains 30-40 eggs. They congregate in areas, brought together by an aggregation pheromone. The technician will need to identify these harbourages to achieve a successful outcome. Sealing harbourages is also important to achieving control.

FLIES

Your pest management technician may apply spray to surfaces where flies are likely to rest. If small flies (drain flies) are present the technician may ask you to have the drains physically cleaned and then treat them with a microbial spray. Your technician may also recommend placement of fly lights or other forms of fly management at your premises. Lights placed higher than 2m will catch moths but are less effective on flies. NOTE: there are two types of fly lights – glue boards and electrocutors. Never use electrocutors near food. Wind currents (fans) will deter flies in outdoor dining areas.

STORED PRODUCT PESTS

Inspection of incoming goods and regular rotation of stock are important for management of stored product pests. If pests are found remove that stock immediately. Pheromone traps should be used to give early warning of any infestation.

There are various techniques and chemicals that your pest management technician may recommend depending on the premises and the pest activity.

Labels and material safety data sheets (MSDS) used by your pest management technician may be viewed at the Garrards website.

www.garrards.com.au (follow the MSDS link).

