

Guidelines on Prevention of Rat and Cockroach Infestations at Food Establishments

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National Environment Agency

INTRODUCTION

The presence of pest in food premises is unacceptable as pests carry a range of pathogens, which can contaminate food and food contact surfaces. Consumption of food and water contaminated by rat and cockroaches may lead to food poisoning and other infectious diseases. They are also capable of damaging foods intended for human consumption.

Rats and cockroaches are pests commonly found in the kitchen of food establishments as it contains an array of food items that serve as welcome habitats for these pests. Pests require food, water and shelter to survive, hence food operators need to eliminate these conditions to prevent pest infestation.

The set of guidelines presented in this document details the necessary measures that a food operator should implement in order to prevent any pest infestation at their food premises.

GUIDELINES

1) Signs of Pest Infestations

a) Rats

- i. Rat droppings
- ii. Smear marks on walls and ceilings made by rats
- iii. Gnaw marks on doors and false ceiling bitten through by rats
- iv. Rat burrows
- v. Sighting of live rats

b) Cockroaches

- i. Cockroach droppings
- ii. Cockroach egg cases
- iii. Odorous smell
- iv. Sighting of live cockroaches

2) Ways to Prevent Rat and Cockroach Infestations

Operators and food handlers of food establishments are responsible to put in place effective pest control measures to protect their premises from any pest infestation. Pest-proof your premises by eliminating food sources, shelter and entry points for pests.

a) Eliminate Food Sources for Pests

- i. Maintain the cleanliness of the premises regularly.
 - Clean kitchen and equipment thoroughly at the end of the day's operation and ensure no food scrap/refuse is left behind.
 - Clean the drains and gullies daily.
 - Clean food/refuse spillage immediately.
- ii. Practise good refuse management at the premises.
 - Empty refuse bins at least once a day.
 - Use proper foot pedal refuse bins that are lined with plastic bags.
 - Keep refuse bins covered at all times when not in use.
 - Bag, tie and dispose of all food wastes and garbage.
- iii. Store food items at least 15 cm above the ground.
- iv. Store food in tightly covered containers, metal cabinets or in screened rat-proof rooms.
- v. Keep the areas below the cooking range and sinks dry and clean.

b) Eliminate Shelters and Entry Points for Pests

- i. Dispose unwanted boxes, crates, piles of newspapers and other articles.
- ii. Store goods properly and inspect the storage area regularly.
- iii. Seal any holes or crevices in the ceilings, walls or floors.
- iv. Ensure that floor traps and downpipe are properly covered with grating.
- v. Install strong wire meshes at doors and window where rodents are prone to enter.
- vi. Cover entrance points by placing air curtains or plastic screens, or installing self-closing doors.

3) Pest Control Measures

Depending on the type of operations, licensees of food establishments can employ physical or chemical pest control measures at their premises.

a) Physical Pest Control Measures

The use of physical pest control measures is preferred when the use of pesticides may present a risk of contamination at the premises. Inspect all traps daily.

b) Chemical Pest Control Measures

For some establishments, there is a need to employ chemical measures, such as the use of pesticides, to control infestation at the premises. As there are risks of possible food contamination and health effects to users, the use of pesticides are strictly to be handled by trained personnel.

4) Pest Control Management System

Food operators can implement their in-house pest control management system or engage a pest control company to prevent pest infestation at their premises. Operators should select the most suitable system based on their operations to control the pests at their premises. The NEA-licensed pest control company engaged should provide systematic pest management services, which comprises the following:

- a) Giving advice on good housekeeping practices.
- b) Inspecting and monitoring pest control measures implemented.
- c) Applying suitable pest control methods for the premises.

It is the responsibility of the licensees to verify the pest control checks done at their premises by the pest control company engaged. Understand the pest control report given and highlight to your staff on the findings. Ensure that all staff is aware of the follow up actions to be taken.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on hygiene guidelines, please visit the National Environment Agency's website at www.nea.gov.sg.