

# APPOINTING A PEST CONTROL CONTRACTOR

As with any service, it is important to ensure that you are getting what you pay for. With pest control this is vital, as an ineffective service can be detrimental to your business and reputation. Below are some things to consider when appointing a pest control contractor.

- Detailed Survey
- Regular Inspections
- Routine Visits
- Planned Follow-Up Visits
- Monitoring
- Regular Reporting
- Your Responsibilities
- Local Knowledge

## DETAILED SURVEY

A thorough survey of your premises should be carried out before any treatment begins. The survey should be of both the internal areas and external areas of your premises. This may include cellars, attics, storage areas, food preparation rooms, areas of dense vegetation and external drains

A good pest control contractor should always spend a reasonable period of time looking in a variety of places where it may be possible for pests to hide.

A thorough survey is not a quick job and must be achieved through a site visit by the pest control contractor. A site survey is important as it helps establish:

- The level of activity
- The location of any activity
- How best to control/treat the activity
- What contributing factors may exist such as poor housekeeping/hygiene, harbourage or inadequate pest proofing
- Factors that may be out of your control
- Any health and safety issues on the site

## REGULAR INSPECTIONS OF ALL AREAS

The initial survey alone is not sufficient to ensure continued control of your premises. To ensure good pest control a contractor should inspect all areas regularly to monitor for new activity.

Following the survey a good pest control contractor will draw up a plan of the site. The plan should show any bait stations located both inside and outside. Other control devices should also be shown on the plan for example electronic insect killing devices (EIKD's), commonly found in kitchens.

Bait stations can be used for non-toxic monitoring and toxic treatment. Any bait stations should be numbered on the plan so that the activity around each station and the effectiveness of any treatment can be monitored.

This enables the pest control contractor to focus on those areas that require attention and also to monitor emerging activity.



## ROUTINE VISITS

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Your contractor should advise you of the number of visits recommended to effectively monitor your individual site. Common pests, such as rats can reproduce roughly every month.

A visit every six to eight weeks will allow a good pest control contractor to identify any signs of new activity and take measures to quickly address this. It is important to ensure that the frequency of visits is relevant for pests of concern in order to ensure that early detection and control is achieved. Pests to consider as part of a comprehensive pest control contract include; rats, mice, cockroaches, ants and flying insects.

## PLANNED FOLLOW-UP VISITS

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If an increase in activity or an infestation is detected on a routine visit, any action taken may not be sufficient to solve the issue and a further follow up visit a week to 10 days later should be undertaken.

Failure to complete a follow up visit may make identifying the source of any activity more difficult. Additionally, a lack of follow up visits can lead to a pest consuming a sub-lethal amount of pesticide (not enough to kill it) which can cause tolerance and resistance in the population to the pesticide. If this occurs rodent activity can actually increase.

## MONITORING

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Bait boxes alone do not constitute good pest control. A good pest control contractor will also monitor what is happening elsewhere in your premises as it is important to be able to spot signs of pest activity. It is not enough to simply check the bait boxes each visit. Bait boxes should be considered a monitoring device and not the only control measure.

## REGULAR REPORTING

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After any visit from a pest control contractor, a clear report should be created and discussed with an appropriate person. The report should clearly state in which bait box on the plan the bait was placed, the type of bait, the active ingredient and the amount. This can vary between bait boxes. This is why a comprehensive record is required to enable careful monitoring.

The report should also include recommendations regarding pest proofing and hygiene measures that can be taken. Any risk to your premises from pests will change depending on the seasons. As such, there should always be recommendations your contractor can make such as vegetation clearance which can assist with reducing risks from pests.

## YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

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It is always the responsibility of the food business operator to ensure that any pest activity on site is appropriately managed. It is therefore vital that you understand the details of any pest control contract, take any actions recommended by your pest control contractor designed to reduce activity, read and monitor any reports issued by the pest control contractor. Be wary of receiving reports that only ever say 'no problems found'.

## LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

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There is a strain of rodenticide resistance called L120Q (previously known as Hampshire and Berkshire resistance) which is known to be present in the rodent population across much of central-southern England.

Of the second generation rodenticides widely available in the UK, resistance has been established to both difenacoum and bromadiolone in certain areas in Hampshire and Berkshire.

During any rodent control treatment in these areas, the possible presence of L120Q rats must be taken into consideration when determining what action to take.

In particular, the Rodenticide Resistance Action Group (2018) recommend that "All infestations present in areas that contain L120Q rats should only be treated with products containing the compounds brodifacoum, difethialone or flocoumafen, where permitted by product labels."

Please see [www.rrac.info/](http://www.rrac.info/) for more information.

