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Pest Control for Hospitality Businesses

Proper food hygiene practices will protect the reputation of your establishment and more importantly empower workers to prevent the spread of food borne diseases. Kitchens and restaurants are known hot spots for pest infestations, which can transmit serious illnesses. This is due to the favourable conditions these areas offer pests, namely food, shelter and warmth. Preventative measures in pest control are critical in saving costs in the long run. This requires proper knowledge of health and safety procedures for food preparation areas.

It is beneficial for hospitality establishments to apply the principles of HACCP. One of the pre-requisites to comply with HACCP is a thorough pest management programme, where the main focus is to keep pests and pest related viruses and bacteria out of food.

Keeping pests at bay is an integral part of the health and safety regulations enforced by the Department of Health and although a food auditor will not audit a restaurant or hotel an environmental health officer is an uninvited guest you do not want to disappoint. The Department of Health has the authority to close down restaurants and hotels if they find as much as one rat or cockroach in your kitchen. Investing in a pest management programme, managed and implemented by a responsible and reputable pest control company forms an integral part of adhering to health and safety regulations and complying with the principles of HACCP.

The most valuable asset of a restaurant or bar is its reputation. This comes principally from the quality of the food and service, but your customers also expect the highest level of hygiene. Mice, rats, flies and cockroaches pose a particular threat to hygiene standards in food preparation and storage areas because of their disease risk. Safe dining is absolutely crucial to the successful operation of any food service business. Not only is it a legal obligation for every restaurant to comply with statutory health and safety guidelines, it is also an ethical responsibility towards diners. The RASA Dine Safe policy covers aspects like food safety and hygiene practices, using accredited suppliers and adequate pest control.

We have found that the major contributor to growing rodent infestations is accessibility of food. Inadequate waste control in areas with large amounts of food retailers and restaurants further leads to the increase of other pests including cockroaches, rats, mice and flies. The best and most environmentally friendly way of eradicating and managing them is through an integrated pest control plan.

The restaurant and bar industry relies heavily on repeat business and superb customer experiences to maintain longevity throughout the year. This is why it is critical for business in this industry to have a pest management

plan in place. We advise our clients to have preventative measures in place that controls pest infestations rather than taking a reactive measure that causes premises to close down. This approach will protect the industry in much needed areas such as food preparation, serving or dining, storage and waste management. The issue of food safety and hygiene, from a legal perspective, is critical to ensure a bar or restaurant's image doesn't get tarnished. Hefty fines or closure notices wait on the other side of non-compliance with food hygiene standards. This is why it is of integral importance to put a pest management plan in place.

Further benefits to the industry will include ongoing, effective protection from pest infestation; professional and reliable advice and treatments; stopping a problem before the infestation is too severe; no problems in satisfying inspection requirements; and the ability to identify and solve any pest issue.

As a market leader in pest control, Mostert Pest Control knows that clients want safe food which is healthy and free from contamination and disease. Added to this, a good working environment for staff and customers are equally important. This can be maintained through preventative measures, early recognition and a quick response to a potentially big problem.

An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is essentially a decision-making process that anticipates and prevents pest activity and infestation by combining several strategies that will support a long term solution. Components of an IPM programme may include training, proper waste management, structural repair, maintenance; biological & mechanical control techniques and pesticides application. A combination of two or more procedures may be the answer for the eradication of a pest problem, in some cases making the use of harsh and environmentally unfriendly products obsolete. An effective IPM system requires time and effort on the part of the service provider to inspect and monitor pest activity, implement proactive procedures and to make suggestions for eliminating points of entry and resting areas. The ultimate objective is to reduce existing problems or to deter potential pest infestations.

Pests rely on three basic aspects for their survival: Food, water and harborage. The fundamental principal of an IPM system rests on the modification of the habitat that the pests thrive in. Decreasing the availability of a suitable habitat and denying access into the premises is the starting point for the control of infestations. An IPM system does not necessarily eliminate the use of a pesticide but would rather include the use of a pesticide in terms of a broader strategy that relies on a combination of activities. An effective IPM programme will, however, reduce the amount of pesticides needed or in some cases entirely eliminate the use of it. There are six steps to a comprehensive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system:

1. Inspection (on-going)

Prior to the signing of a service agreement it is vital to do a thorough inspection of the premises in question. It is of the utmost importance for a practitioner to verify exactly what they are dealing with before doing a quote. Costs surrounding staff required, equipment and consumables play a big role in the profitability of a service agreement and should, therefore, be carefully considered. This can only be done if the practitioner has all the information at their disposal. A large portion of the initial inspection is heavily reliant upon the information provided by the client. It is advisable to request a thorough brief from the client in terms of what is required and keeping the information on file for future reference. The process does not, however, stop here. Practitioners should have regular inspections of the site throughout the service period specified in order to establish whether the target is being met and maintained.

2. Identifying pests and conducive conditions

The correct identification of pests within an environment will save time and money in terms of applying the correct strategy from the word go. Identifying specific pests will lead to the correct prognoses in terms of effective habitat modification and effective product usage. In most cases a simple alteration in the environment is all that is needed to eradicate a problem. Maintaining an alteration in the environment becomes a vital aspect to the success of the programme.

3. Prevention

Prevention is better than cure I hear you say, and truer words have never been spoken, making the treatment the source of origination crucial to any IPM system. A good starting point is to identify access points to the premises effectively. In most cases all alteration to the premises will be an adequate provision to make but will, however need the blessing of the client in terms of the expense. In certain cases simple and on-going maintenance of an area is needed to address the problem or support the alteration. For any facility manager the disposing area presents the biggest headache in terms of pest infestation. Restaurants, cinemas and food processing areas still remain the usual culprits necessitating the need for a thorough and effective cleaning schedule which should aid

the process. In a facility management scenario the situation is further complicated by the fact that each tenant is responsible for their own premises in terms of cleaning, sanitation and pest control. This puts the contractor in a precarious position if the tenant's premises are not maintained, often leading to problems spreading to common areas. The best approach is to address the issue on a management level and to motivate the co-operation of the entire facility on the matter. In most cases frequent and thorough housekeeping will greatly aid in the implementation of a successful Integrated Pest Management System. On-going sanitation of facilities, particularly around food processing areas and bathroom facilities will go a long way in eradicating the harborage potential of a facility for pests.

4. Customer consultation

Regular meetings and communication with the client will ensure that everyone on the same page in terms of orchestrating timing and effectiveness of procedures, especially when different departments need to be utilized. In a facility management environment a pest control technician should be able to identify sources of infestation within the facility.

5. Procedure and application

Once the necessary course of action has been identified a structured plan of action needs to be implemented for an effective IPM system. The compilation of a comprehensive procedure schedule becomes vital in guiding staff members in performing their duties in accordance within the agreement. The supervision of staff members, especially during the application of agricultural remedies is vital as public health and safety is of paramount importance.

6. Evaluation and monitoring (on-going)

No programs will be complete without regular evaluation of it, in terms of establishing effectiveness on the process. In the event of adjustments made to the process, it is advisable to monitor the adjustment in order to establish whether the change is effective. On-going training and evaluation of staff members is vital in maintaining standards and ensuring that the job at hand is performed at the level agreed upon.

7. Pest control and HACCP

HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) is an industry standard specifically focused around the safe and regulated food processing environment where food is produced and dispensed. In most cases the standard of the process is determined by the client.

The introduction of potentially toxic chemicals in a sensitive area such as the food processing area should not be taken lightly. Public health and the prevention of chemical contamination of food processing areas are of paramount importance to any pest control technician. This aspect once again reinforces the philosophy of using pest control chemicals as an absolute last resort. It is important to distinguish the difference between a pest control technician and a HACCP compliant company. HACCP is a food industry standard and a pest control technician can merely comply with the standard when operating within the environment, which does not define what a pest control technician does.

South African legislation surrounding HACCP standards stretch as far as SABS terms and guidelines, with select companies such as Consulting Microbiological Laboratory (CML) offering microbiological testing and consulting services. So how does the pest control technician fit into the picture? Their role is simply that of adhering to the guidelines and complementing current activities within any environment. Eradicating unwanted pests that could interfere with the safe production, packaging and distribution of food products will complement a HACCP programme if completed in compliance with HACCP standards.

8. Training and Quality control

Ongoing training as a pest control operator is vital. The operator has to qualify in the Pest Control Service Industries Board requirements (PCSIB) and then register with the Department of Agriculture as a pest control operator.

We strive to build lasting and strong relationships/partnerships with our clients, working towards common goals in the achievement of the highest Hygiene standards.

A food service establishment must be free of all pests, flies, roaches, ants, mice, and rats. Rodents and insects walk and feed on all kinds of filth, pick up germs on their feet and bodies, and then deposit the germs on any food and utensil they touch. A restaurant deals with a lot of food storage and you don't want to take any chances of damage caused by pests.

Lisa Joubert

Mostert Pest Control Durban

Some tips for controlling pests are:

- Seal cracks and keep screens closed;
- Keep foods covered and clean up spilled foods immediately;
- Dispose of trash and garbage promptly;
- Close all openings around wiring, drain pipes and vents to make them rat and insect proof;
- Carefully follow instructions on labels when using poisons and chemicals. Purchase and use only those approved by the health authority for use in food establishments;
- Food products, such as flour, sugar, pancake mix, etc., should be removed from their original containers and placed in approved sealed tight containers that are properly labeled and more impermeable to pests (rodent proof);
- Garbage and trash are breeding places for diseases, germs, and insects and serve as food for rodents. To avoid this keep garbage and trash in easily washed containers that are tight fitting and prevent flies from entering and use plastic liners for garbage cans to aid in cleaning the containers. If plastic liners are not used, newspaper can be used but is not as effective;
- Wash garbage cans daily with hot, soapy water. Use rodent bait in and near the garbage and waste area;
- Routinely inspect incoming shipments of food, supplies, and premises for bugs to control the spread of pests;
- Eliminate harboring conditions where pests might nest;
- Use trapping devices/electric fly killers or other means of pest control to minimize spread;
- Leave work and dining area clean from debris that pests may feed upon.



RASA member offer:

Pest Control has become an integral part of responsible business in the restaurant industry in South Africa. Mostert Pest Control is providing an exclusive offer to all registered RASA members. Upon signing a new contract for any Mostert Pest Control service, a price deduction of 12% will be given to RASA members only. Terms and conditions apply.



Contact any of our branches for assistance or advice at:

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