



# National standards of healthcare cleanliness 2021: pest control

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## Introduction

Pest control and management is essential for safe and hygienic healthcare facilities, and organisations must have effective and appropriate pest control management policies, procedures, contracts/services and systems. Pest activity can pose unacceptable risks to patients, staff and visitors, undermine reputation and public confidence, and damage the environment and food products.

## Procurement

Organisations should procure licensed specialist contractors to support pest control. Pest control contracts or service specifications should be developed from considering the following:

- Different sites, environments and geographical areas will have different common pest issues. Organisations should ensure that the pest control contract/service they procure reflects local need. The most common pests into four categories: rodents (rats and mice), crawling insects (ants, fleas, cockroaches, silverfish, bed bugs), flying insects (wasps, bees, hornets, moths, flies) and birds (pigeons).
- Pest control provision should cover both internal and external areas.
- The specification should identify the priority for the different types of pests, dependent on how common the pests are and what risks they pose.
- The specification should prioritise pest activity/infestation in high risks areas, i.e. clinical and food areas.
- The specification should state if the service needs to be proactive, reactive or a combination of the two:
  - proactive service – routine scheduled visits to monitor, bait and inspect
  - reactive service – a call-on service provided in response to evidence of pests.
- The specification should detail a process for pest control, whether this should be reported back to the organisation or it is progressed by the contractor. Areas prone to pest activity should be managed and pest ingress points should be blocked (proofing).

- The specification should detail expected riddance timeframes for the pests covered. This should consider the specific pest, the risk it poses and how long effective treatment/work takes. Additionally, it should detail an initial response time for visits following a report of activity.

Pest control contractors/service providers should provide service reports on every visit: date and time of the visit, areas or locations inspected/treated, pest activity identified, any treatment/work completed and next steps and recommendations (i.e. proofing or housekeeping).

We recommend that where pest concerns exist, organisations should use contractors/specialist personnel to carry out surveys/detailed inspections to identify factors that may be contributing to or sustaining pest control issues or infestations. Recommendations on proofing work and other factors such as housekeeping should be sought.

## Health and Safety

Due to the nature of pest control work, and its associated risks, organisations should ensure that pest control work is undertaken safely and legally. Contractors/service providers should complete detailed risk assessments to determine the most favourable treatment option for pest infestation and what control measures will be put in place. They should be required to:

- use appropriate pesticides and methods of work/application that comply with all relevant health and safety legislation and best practice<sup>1</sup>
- provide full details of all pesticides and other products to be used, as well as how they will be used
- provide COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) data sheets relating to all pesticides used, risk assessments and method statements (RAMS)
- keep all equipment and goods safe and under control, with all pesticides containers clearly and correctly labelled
- create a physical barrier or display appropriate signage/warning notices where insecticidal dusts have been used, barring entry until products and contaminants have settled

<sup>1</sup> Refer to Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)

- remove all waste materials after completing pest control work.

## Policies and Procedures

Organisations should also have a local pest control policy along with any required procedures. We recommend that the local policy covers:

- roles and responsibilities in relation to pest control management
- local definition of pests covered by the policy
- contractor/service provider details
- contractor/service provider arrangements, ie proactive, reactive or combined
- contract/service specification levels
- expected response and riddance times for the pests identified
- health and safety requirements and considerations
- monitoring of performance.

Organisations should promote staff compliance with good housekeeping practices to help limit pest control incidents and issues. Food/drink waste and debris are a significant contributory factor and their removal should be prioritised.

Pest control needs to be carried out in partnership, with cleaning, food and waste services. Otherwise, for example, cleaning can disturb baits and waste build up can attract pests

Internal and external waste areas should be kept clean and free from spillages, and the waste receptacles should be fit for purpose. Food preparation and service areas should be kept clean and tidy; we recommend a 'clean as you go' approach. Food should only be stored in pest-proof sealed containers and food waste and spillages should be dealt with and disposed of promptly and appropriately.

Pest control should also fully comply with local infection prevention and control policy and procedure in relation to reportable infestations, for instance 'human carrier' pests such as fleas, mites and lice. Organisations are likely to have specific policies and procedures for these infestations.

Pest control contracts, services, policies and procedures should be monitored and reviewed as required locally to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the organisation.

Contact us: [nhsi.estatesandfacilities@nhs.net](mailto:nhsi.estatesandfacilities@nhs.net)

NHS England and NHS Improvement  
Skipton House  
80 London Road  
London  
SE1 6LH

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