



# SCRUBBING OUT PESTS: HOW TO CREATE YOUR SANITATION SCHEDULE

In the foodservice industry, there's little room for error when it comes to health and safety. As a manager, you're responsible for ensuring sanitary conditions in both front-of-house and back-of-house areas of the building. Proper sanitation is key for passing third-party inspection and maintaining an exceptional customer experience, and pest management is a crucial part of that. Just one pest sighting can ruin a customer's experience, and an infestation can cause significant issues for any restaurant.

## SETTING UP SANITATION PROCEDURES

Once you've identified which areas are most at risk, it's time to implement a scheduled cleaning plan. Practicing vigilant sanitation helps to eliminate ideal conditions for pests.

Here's what else to consider when creating your plan:



**Eliminating odours:** Odour is the top attractant for many pests. Think about what could be generating smells that signal to pests that food is available. Perhaps it's wet, decaying garbage, spoiled food products, or organic matter buildup on kitchen equipment or in drains. Make sure any odour-heavy areas receive regular attention to remove odour-causing organisms like bacteria and others.



**Reducing garbage exposure:** When it comes to garbage, pests can hardly resist. Keep the lids on interior trash receptacles sealed tight and change the liners regularly. Remember to clean the bottoms of receptacles prior to relining. Place exterior dumpsters as far away from the building as possible, and ensure your waste management company is routinely cleaning or rotating the dumpster. Remember to check or inspect under the compactors for seepage and spills, and make sure the compactors are set on concrete pads. Compactors set directly on the ground can leak into the soil, offering harbourage and breeding sites for pests. Additionally, recycled cans and bottles can be breeding sources for pests, so drain these materials prior to putting them into bins, and place them upside down to prevent any further draining. You should also clean inside bins frequently, including each time they're emptied.



**Keeping food fresh:** Pests love rotting food items. Be sure to rotate produce stock frequently to ensure freshness and eliminate moisture, which can create ideal conditions for maggots. Try using a first-in-first-out approach to help reduce the likelihood that ingredients will spoil.



**Cleaning drains:** As mentioned above, drains are a common problem area for pests that are attracted to moisture. Even if you haven't noticed a problem in or around your drains, it's wise to make sure all drains are checked and cleaned periodically with a biological drain cleaner.



**Checking the gaps:** Examine hard-to-reach spots around stoves, refrigeration units, counters, food prep areas and dishwashing machines, as these areas can conceal food spills, particles and debris, which create pest attractants and harbourage. Schedule a deep clean of these areas at least once a week.



**Managing sources of liquid:** Beverage dispensing machines and stations, backflows, taps, sink drains and associated accessories should be cleaned daily and deep cleaned at least once a week to prevent pest breeding.



And of course, you probably can't do all of this alone. Your employees can be a huge help, so make sure they're aware of the sanitation procedures and actively taking part in carrying them out on a regular schedule.

## WORKING WITH A PEST MANAGEMENT PROVIDER

Sanitation is just the beginning of a comprehensive set of solutions for dealing with unwanted pests. Because these pests are a near constant threat in restaurant environments, managing them effectively requires a strategic pest control program. Your pest management provider can help you make a detailed plan that includes identifying problem areas and attractants, conducting ongoing inspections, implementing exclusion procedures, and developing monitoring and control strategies, in addition to maintaining stringent sanitation practices.



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