

Surviving the Recession Special



What is alexo?

alexo is BPCA's digital magazine designed to keep your business informed about public health pest control.

alexo is packed with professional advice from leading experts in the pest control industry, and is the only magazine you need to tackle your organisation's pest problems.

Why choose a BPCA member?

By choosing a BPCA member you are ensuring the use of a contractor who can provide a professional and consistent service.

All BPCA members meet our strict membership criteria, hold the relevant pest control insurances, and are fully qualified and trained to deal with your pest problems.



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Getting the best from your pest controller

Tips and advice on how to save money on your pest control contract.



Green Pest Control

Use Integrated Pest Management to save money as well as the planet.



False Economies

Why it makes sense to hire a professional rather than doing it yourself.

GETTING THE BEST FROM YOUR PEST CONTROLLER

The provision of pest control services to a professional standard can be an area which is overlooked. Yet, the economic consequences of inadequate pest control could be catastrophic.

Why is pest control important?

In short, pests mean dirt, damage, disease... and cost money. In the current economic climate any inefficient expenditure can mean the difference between a business surviving and going to the wall. Allowing pests to thrive by scrimping on pest control is a false economy.

Contamination

Insects, rodents and birds contaminate food, equipment and working surfaces and many carry bacteria, viruses, spores or parasites. Some produce allergic reactions in susceptible individuals.

Damage

Rats and mice have caused serious fires by gnawing the insulation from electrical cables, floods by puncturing pipes, and even death by chewing holes in gas pipes. They can also ruin packaging, polystyrene insulation and finished goods in-store.

Insect infestation may cause the rejection of whole consignments of goods, the halting of production and the recall of products. Contracts may be terminated if suppliers fail to meet hygiene standards.

Loss of Business

Prosecutions and fines for pest-infested premises make headlines that cause customers to shop or dine elsewhere.

Loss of business can sometimes lead to closure. Lost goodwill and damaged confidence are inevitable, caused by media reports such as 'the hospital with death for lunch' or 'restaurant fined £15,000.'

Kevin Higgins, BPCA membership manager, explains how to maximise your return on investment by selecting a professional and getting the contract right.



Legislation

If you are a property owner the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 insists you keep your premises free from rodents or report the infestation to your local authority if rodents are present in substantial numbers. If you are in a food business, the Act requires you to report any rodent infestations.

The Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1995 insists food premises are kept as pest free – insects and birds as well as rodents – as is practicable and the Act extends to cover any vehicle used to transport food.

Failure to keep your premises pest free can result in their closure and penalties of up to £20,000 fine for each offence, or up to six months in prison for serious breaches.

Appoint a professional pest control contractor

Professional pest control provides protection from the risks of pest-borne contamination and damage by pests. A comprehensive pest control contract covers preventative measures, management reporting procedures, accountability, and a documented system of measures which provide appropriate evidence for the defence of 'due diligence' against prosecution and its consequences.

Professional pest controllers also provide the necessary documentation and risk assessment for employers to meet the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999 (COSHH).

A professional pest control contract ensures that you have no infestation problems – and that you stay that way.

How to choose a pest control contractor

When selecting a pest control contractor, consider the following:

- The ability of the contractor to carry out a full survey of the premises and present a clear report, with action points, recommendations and a firm quotation of costs.
- Evidence of adequate technical

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resources and of correctly trained and qualified service staff, supervisors and management. If individual technicians belong to the PROMPT (Professional Register of Managers and Pest Technicians) scheme, this provides the necessary evidence. The register is a list of pest



control managers and technicians with a recognised industry qualification, who agree to abide by a written Code of Professional Ethics, and can prove that their technical knowledge is up to date. To stay on the register, members must obtain a prescribed number of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points.

- Proof of adequate public liability, product liability and employers' liability insurance cover.
- The capacity to provide proofing and other preventative measures such as advice on housekeeping, storage, waste disposal, cleaning and the detection and monitoring of pest populations.
- Reporting procedures giving clear accountability on both sides.
- Clear contract terms to specify the pests to be covered, frequency of visits, responsibility for preventative measures, arrangements for extra treatments or emergency call-outs.

Choose a member of the BPCA

When purchasing services, unlike goods, buyers cannot see what they are getting before making up their mind. The decision to take on a service contractor is, therefore, something of an act of faith, and buyers cannot afford to make a mistake.

By choosing a BPCA member you are ensuring the contractor is able to provide a thoroughly professional and consistent service.

All reputable pest control contractors should:

- be able to give appropriate assurances that they comply fully with all aspects of the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 and other relevant legislation such as the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999
- 'employ' staff who hold the BPCA/RSPH Award in Pest Management and are recording their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through registration on a recognised CPD scheme.
- be able to provide evidence of financial stability, length of experience in pest control, and be prepared to supply a list of at least six clients from whom references may be sought.
- be able to detail the extent of their own technical resources or access to independent research and development, identification services and quality assessment.



FALSE ECONOMIES

Everyone likes to save money and if we can do a job successfully why pay a professional to do it for us? With the wealth of pest control products available at the leading DIY stores today, the task of keeping bugs and vermin at bay may well seem to be within everyone's level of competence.

BUT do you know that rats are neophobic? Do you know that if you catch that annoying grey squirrel in your loft and release it into the wild, you are breaking the law? Are you aware of the diseases carried by rats, mice, cockroaches, flies and other public health pests? These are just two of the many legal and behavioral issues that need to be taken into account if you are going to embark on the path of amateur pest controller. Otherwise the cheap option may well turn out to be a false economy

By choosing a professional company who is a member of the British Pest Control Association you are ensuring that the contractor is able to provide a thoroughly professional and consistent service. Professional companies employ technicians trained in the biology and behaviour of pests, to ensure that treatment is done in the most effective way to gain control. They will also have access to more efficacious products cleared for professional use only and will have knowledge of all the legislation which may be associated with a particular pest. All members of the British Pest Control Association must initially be able to meet, and then maintain, the rigorous criteria laid down for membership, which includes all staff are to be trained in the identification and eradication of pests, the safe storage and transport of pesticides, adequate public, products and employers' liability insurance and a trading history. A BPCA Technical Officer regularly audits all members and companies must conform to the Association's Code of Practice and Code of Conduct.

Further information

BPCA publishes alexo magazine on a regular basis through the year, to assist..., to assist and guide you in pest control matters. We also offer a "find a local pest controller search, enabling you to search for a company by size and pest problem. Subscribe to receive alexo or find a local pest controller at www.bpca.org.uk

Pest control contract specifications

Effective pest control requires a partnership between the client and their needs, and the client's understanding of what is technically possible and economically viable.

This understanding can be reached through a contract specification which clearly defines the service to be provided whilst avoiding unreasonable or unrealistic demands of the contractor.

This article seeks to assist clients draft contract specifications to suit their premises. It is not possible to draw up a single contract specification or even a model which can simply be adopted by all. What can be given is an outline of the features which should be covered by all contract specifications.

Time should be taken drawing up the specification, if in doubt seek advice. Potential contractors will assist, as will the BPCA and independent consultants to the industry. If your premises are particularly large or complex, consider employing the services of a specialist to conduct a pre-tender survey and help you prepare your specification.



The contract specification should cover the following points:

Company policy towards infestation and level of control

The contractor should understand what is required of them. This may not be as obvious as it seems and the client should not, therefore, expect such a service to come cheaply. The contract specification should tell the contractor what level of control is required and where.

Range of pests covered

Most servicing agreements cover a narrow range of pests which cause public health problems in commercial premises. Ensure a list is included, and consider restricting this list to pests you may currently have or experienced recently. If you include others, contractors will have to allow for them in their costing, although adequate preventative measures should not be overlooked.

Access

Pest control technicians require access to all areas which may need inspection or treatment. Some treatments may require that other personnel be excluded during the treatment. Limitations to access should be made clear in the specification.

Pest control methods

Legislation restricts what pesticides can be used, where and how. Only trained personnel may use pesticides or decide how they are used. Selection of the appropriate pesticide is the contractor's responsibility. Contracts should not specify what pesticides should be used or request supplies of pesticide for the client's staff to apply.

Clients may operate policies which will restrict control methods adopted by the contractor. For example hygiene requirements may preclude the use of any pesticides in certain areas. Such policies should be made clear in the contract specification and alternatives discussed with potential contractors at the pre-tendering stage.

Type and frequency of visits

Inspection and service will take place during visits to the premises by the contractor. Visits will be of three types and conditions should be developed covering each, including frequency and type of visits covered by the price:

Routine inspections

A pre-arranged number of regular inspections. In restaurants and hotels the frequency will often be eight per year at six weekly intervals. Fewer visits will be insufficient to prevent infestations from developing. Some premises will require more frequent inspection – 13 or 26 visits per year. Inspections should be regular in an eight visit contract, seven visits in the last three months will not be acceptable.

Emergency call outs

An arrangement should exist whereby the contractor can be called out to deal with a specific problem, and clearly defined. In particular how soon after the call-out the contractor is required on site, what constitutes an 'emergency' and who is authorised to make the call.

Follow up visits

Additional visits may be required to reinforce control measures.

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Liaison

To co-ordinate communications between the client and the contractor it is usual for an 'authorised officer' to be appointed, who should:

- have a working knowledge of pest control
- overview all premises covered by the contract specification
- have authority to facilitate any actions proposed by the contractor to ensure that remedial treatments are effective
- be recognised by all staff employed by the client as the central point for reporting pest problems
- have time to accompany the contractor during some inspections to foster an understanding of the actions taken by the contractor.

Reporting

The contractor should institute a system of written reports on all visits. These should be dated and describe the extent of treatments undertaken. The identity of all pesticides applied should be recorded, together with any warnings/precautions to be undertaken by client's staff in relation to the pesticides applied/work carried out.

An important aspect of pest control is denial of access to pests and maintenance of an environment which discourages the development of infestation. Reports should detail advice regarding proofing against access, denial of harbourage and removal of food sources, to facilitate control measures and to discourage infestation.

Reports should be lodged with the authorised officer and should form the basis of liaison between client and contractor.

Contract period

This should be for a period of at least one year. In large and more complex premises, involving a major riddance programme or where significant allocation of resources by the contractor is required, the minimum period should be longer.

Cancellation

Terms for cancellation and periods of notice should be defined.

Payment terms

These should normally be three months, six months or twelve months in advance and billed at regular

Do you need help with preparing the right contract specification to suit your business needs? BPCA can help you with all your pest control needs, from designing specifications, to finding a professional pest controller. Find out more at www.bpca.org.uk/advice

REMEMBER!
Find a local professional pest controller
bpca.org.uk



Selection of servicing companies

Draw up a list of pest control servicing companies. As a minimum, ensure candidates:

- have a good track record - seek references
- employ adequately trained and competent technicians
- carry sufficient insurance cover
- business is structured to provide a professional service and a recording system that accounts for all work carried out.

Make sure your tenderers have the resources to meet the requirements of your contract. Many contracts can be handled by a sole trader or partnership, whilst others may require the commitment of greater resources.

Invitation and receipt of tenders

When inviting companies to tender be prepared to assist them with a realistic, but competitive, quotation.

- Give companies adequate time to survey the site. The site's complexity, geography and history will need to be understood for a quotation to be calculated.
- During the site survey provide access and assistance as required.
- If the site is very large, complex or critical, consider commissioning a pre-tender survey, by an independent organisation. Make this available to tenderers to assist them with their quotation.

The above procedure should make the tender selection process straight forward. The objective is to obtain the best possible price for companies quoting against the same criteria and you should then be able to select the lowest price from a short list. However, if the lowest tender is significantly cheaper than the rest then think carefully.

Awarding the contract

Having awarded the contract, notify all involved as quickly as possible. You are not obliged to give unsuccessful tenders any information other than they were unsuccessful. Some information can however be useful particularly if you want them to tender in the future.



green pest control

For many premises managers, a proactive pest management strategy is low down the list of business priorities. But when selecting a pest control contract, care should be given to specify a contractor that can prevent pests rather than cure their effects, and can do this using the minimum of chemicals.

When a site embraces the need for proactive pest control and is working towards 'pesticide free' pest control at that, many pest problems can be stopped in their tracks. Some may not even see the light of day. Green pest control might range from a firm claiming to spray less pesticides to one that will use every possible alternative to chemicals including heating, freezing, and deep cleaning. The difference between these approaches is the point at which chemicals are used. At one end of the spectrum chemicals are used at an early stage, at the other they are the very last port of call.

BPCA's members practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a sustainable approach to managing pests by combining biological, cultural, physical and chemical tools in a way that minimises economic, health, and environmental risks. IPM has been around for thousands of years, and started when man first became an agrarian society. It protects people and food as well as the environment.

Professional pest controllers use the minimum of biocides wherever possible, using other means to limit the pest population through their understanding of the biology and habits of pest species, emphasizing control not eradication. Ralph Izod, Managing Director of pest management specialists Dyno-Pest has worked with a range of public sector clients over the last 25 years. He knows from experience that a holistic 'root and branch' approach to pest control is vital and that today, many of the insecticide treatments can be replaced by treatments that are preventative in nature and that don't use chemicals. Ralph explains "experienced pest control teams know how important it is to protect their premises, their staff and members of the public from unwanted pests." He added "that's why every facility needs a pest control policy based on prevention and monitoring with minimum reliance on chemical treatments".

The alternative treatments administered include heat treatments, cryogenics, new generation insecticide gels, pheromone lures and pesticide free materials in preference to the more traditional insecticidal spray treatments that are often dispersed over a wide area. Rodent bait boxes full of toxic bait can be replaced by non-toxic monitoring stations which pick up the earliest signs of an infestation. Where possible it's preferable to control rodents before they even enter the building by protecting the perimeter. Recently it has also become possible to control mice almost invisibly by using specialist bait stations that control rodents within the walls of a building before they become active within open areas.

But what is the business case for 'green' pest control? Apart from saving your business money by preventing infestation, contractors who practice IPM will also work with you to change the culture of your organisation, helping all your employees to change behaviours and thus make your premises less attractive to pests.

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Site managers should not overlook the importance of implementing simple but effective pest prevention measures including finding and proofing possible pest entry points into the property such as holes around pipes, weep joints and air vents, installing fly screens, having the new breed of electronic fly killers in catering areas and front-of-house, and using insect growth regulators. An infestation could have its origins in a delivery or even brought in by unsuspecting staff or visitors – pests are adept at hitch-hiking. Therefore staff should be vigilant, especially when checking incoming deliveries and look for evidence of pests.

One area of concern is the rise in the number of sites reporting bed bugs, which might surprise many people who associate this pest with houses and cheap hotels. Visitors and staff are unwittingly bringing them into the building, attached to their clothes. However, if members of staff know how to spot the earliest signs of a bed bug infestation and crucially where to look for bed bugs, the problem can be contained with professionally delivered chemical-free heat treatment.

When chemicals become the last resort, IPM calls for their use at lowest possible concentrations and in the most targeted method possible. Baiting for cockroaches, who then who carry the bait in their bodies for other cockroaches to consume, is far preferable to spraying. Similarly, monitoring pest movement to place poisons where there is most activity significantly reduces chemical usage – ie the sniper approach rather than the shotgun.

One significant issue to note: IPM will not work without the active involvement of both the pest control contractor and the client. If the client carries out the relevant cleaning, proofing and other measures, control of infestation is established faster, more efficiently and with less risk. BPCA Technical Manager Richard Moseley says “in my experience the main reason for failure in controlling an infestation is lack of client awareness of their responsibilities. Many building owners assume they simply hire a contractor to deal with the problem, but change must come from within as well”

BPCA offer a staff awareness training course which can be delivered at your workplace and may be a real cost saving benefit to you and your staff team.

Fundamentally for any site, sustainable pest control has to be assigned a much higher level of importance and should be included in the specification in order to prevent infestation while delivering cost-effective integrated pest management, to the benefit of both the planet and the bottom line.

Further information

Should you require further information on contractors who meet BPCA specifications and are members of our Association, or on any specialist treatment processes please contact BPCA on 01332 294288 or visit our website at www.bpca.org.uk

SIX SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS:

1 Physical control - The number one most efficient pest control procedure is to keep the pests out in the first place. By fitting bristle strip brushes, using cement and expanding foam with wire mesh, one London hospital was able to drastically reduce its rodent problem and improve heating efficiency policies and targets. David Lodge of Beaver Pest Control carried out the work, and commented “We also fitted numerous strip curtain doors which reduced flying insect ingress, and dramatically reduced heat loss, saving the Trust thousands of pounds each year.” However if a pest gets in, removing food and water sources is essential.

2 External Proofing - Preserving the exterior of a site whilst proofing it from pest birds is now possible with low impact highly effective bird control treatments such as fire gel, trapping and electronic deterrent systems, bristle brushes, even discreet netting. A combination of leaves and bird guano can quickly block gutters and downpipes, resulting in overflows which damage walls and may cause months of closure of an area for remedial work. Preventing access is not however just about proofing.

3 Electronic Measurers - Flies within a property can be controlled using low-energy units such as P+L Systems' Allure, which is not only more energy efficient (30W instead of 40W), but also attracts more flies due to the design, which mimics a light fitting and so can be used front-of-house. Rodents can be deterred by using electronic systems, though these can have limited effectiveness.

4 Non-toxic treatments - While it may seem oxymoronic, pest controllers can use non-toxic dusts to kill insects. These work by acting as a desiccant, and are particularly effective when used in partition walls to limit insect growth. Rodents can be controlled using catch traps (even humane ones that do not kill), but this adds significant costs as they need to be checked on a regular basis. In certain limited cases, professionals will even use glue boards to catch rodents or insects.

5 Pheromone Control - Predominately used for moths, this modern sustainable and chemical-free method of intelligent pest management causes a significant measurable reduction in pest moth populations. The treatment protects round-the-clock from the risk of damage caused by the five common species of moth.

6 Heat and Cold - Used primarily for bed bugs, the treatments are also effective against a range of crawling pests. Done properly, full control can be achieved with a single treatment as it kills every stage of the insect life cycle (adults, larvae, pupae, and eggs), but make sure your heat treatment company is fully trained. Cold systems like the use of Carbon Dioxide dry ice to reach a temperature of -60C. The instant nature of cold treatments prevent insects moving to other areas of the property, so they are particularly useful for small-scale infestations.

BPCA online

If you are searching for a professional pest controller, then look no further!

Searching for a professional pest controller? Our database of hundreds of UK pest control companies with thousands of branches across the UK allows you to search by:

- Domestic or commercial contract
- Pest type – bed bugs, wasps, rats, mice, birds, mammals, and many more
- Distance from your premises
- Area covered

Visit www.bpca.org.uk
or call 01332 294 288



Worried about what you've read in this issue of **alexo**?



Have you bought pest control solely on price?
What criteria did you use to select your servicing company?
Are you convinced it will protect your business?

We can help with...

- Producing pest control specifications, contracts and tenders
- Pest awareness training
- Associate membership of BPCA
- Consultancy services
- Pest identification
- Finding you a professional contractor
- General pest advice

Find out more at
www.bpca.org.uk/advice

