

Facilities Management from A to Z

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There are many families of insects and spiders that are pests in the workplace. Some are a risk because of their bite or sting; others because they spread disease or contaminate food while others because of the damage they cause to property or materials.

The presence of pests may also lead to prosecution for non-compliance with regulations covering areas like food hygiene. The Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995 are designed to bring to the attention of all businesses that are dealing with food the need to provide to the public food that is 'fit and proper for consumption'. The presence of pests or the diseases that they carry within that food leads to risks to the public and therefore contravenes the law. This can then lead to prosecution.

However, pests can cause a nuisance not just because of their ability to contaminate food. They can also cause other safety risks such as personal injury. If these instances occur on business premises then these businesses are subject to legislation as laid down under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

In catering much concern is expressed regarding the contamination of food with the rodenticides and the insecticides used on a site. This has led to increased measures being implemented to prevent the pests from gaining entry thus negating the need for the use of possible 'substances hazardous to health'- namely pesticides.

Because of their small size, insects, whether they are flying or crawling, find it generally quite easy to enter a building that has not been consciously proofed against insect entry. Many pest insects are nocturnal and therefore it is essential that doors and particularly windows are sealed at night if the pests are to be excluded.

Habitat reduction is the reduction or limitation of the areas where the insect can feed, live and breed. If the pest does break the barriers of defence designed to prevent entry into a building in the first place, it is important that from that point onwards the existing conditions within the building are as unattractive as possible.

Guidance on all pest control issues is available from the British Pest Control Association which is the trade association for the industry in the UK www.bpca.org.uk