

# Operator Guidance - Pests: How to Respond?

The Department of Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ) protects public health by implementing the Food Safety Program which is responsible for the oversight of all retail food facilities within the county. As part of retail food facility operations, steps need to be taken to protect the health of the public when an imminent health hazard is observed.

If a food facility observes evidence of vermin (rodents or cockroaches) within their facility that consists of actual live bodies, droppings, urine stains, or gnaw marks, they must immediately stop food service and work to resolve the issue prior to reopening their business to protect the general public from diseases caused by the presence of pests within a food facility.

## Steps to Eliminate Pest Activity at Your Facility



**Pest Control -  
Eliminate Pests  
Activity Safely  
and Quickly**



**Remove Evidence  
of Pest Activity,  
Clean and  
Sanitize the  
Facility**



**Eliminate  
Harborage Areas  
Associated with  
the Infestation**



**Conduct a Self-  
Inspection of the  
Facility**

### Pest Control

A licensed pest control service is a necessary part of eliminating an infestation. While you could try eliminating the problem yourself, complicated issues such as cockroach or rodent activity are best addressed by professionals who can treat your facility quickly and most importantly, safely.

### Cleaning and Sanitizing

When cleaning up after treatment of an infestation, be sure to clean up urine, droppings, nests, and dead pests within the facility. Discard food items damaged by gnaw marks and any potentially contaminated foods as well as any items that cannot be cleaned and sanitized, like disposable tableware or napkins. Ensure all food contact surfaces and non-food contact surfaces are properly washed and sanitized. All cleaning must be completed prior to requesting a reopen inspection.

### Eliminating Harborage Areas

Remove clutter and unused equipment, and eliminate gaps in the walls, ceiling, shelving, or other deteriorated surfaces that can serve as future harborage areas and pose a barrier to effective pest control. Proper exclusion work must be completed prior to requesting a reopen inspection.

### Self-Inspection

Using a flashlight, look around all food and beverage preparation areas and dish washing areas for signs of pests. Look underneath and behind all equipment, in corners, and on the underside of shelving. Once you have verified that there is no further evidence an infestation within the facility, contact your area inspector to schedule a reopen inspection.

