



Julia Baker

The complexity of maintaining pest control and hygiene

When considering hygiene and pest control, it is important to keep what happens behind the scenes confidential. Consumers only want to see a clean, hygienic, and pest-free environment, so what goes into achieving this? And just how achievable is it to maintain a completely pest-free and clean space?

South African health regulations stipulate clear guidelines for businesses, especially those in the food and health sectors. The guidelines are designed to ensure the safety and well-being of consumers and employees.

In addition to penalties, businesses could potentially face legal action if pest-related problems cause harm to a customer or an employee's health. Upholding cleanliness and controlling pests is vital for meeting the regulations enforced by authorities overseeing food-related industries and supply chain. The following national departments are the main parties responsible for food legislation ...

- The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)
- The National Department of Health
- The Department of Trade and Industry

The National Department of Health requires that all foodstuffs shall be safe for human consumption



Image by Nikolett Emmert, Unsplash

A proactive approach is suggested as pests leave droppings, urine, hair, and other dangerous parts that pose serious health hazards and can transmit diseases.

By eliminating pests, both food producers and retailers can preserve the integrity of their products and services. These unwanted pests not only cause physical harm to food and packaging, making them unfit for consumption,

in terms of the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectant Act, 1972 (FCD Act). Matters regarding the hygiene of foodstuffs are addressed by the National Health Act, 2003.

Pest control

Regular inspections and preventative measures are essential components of pest control to safeguard your business from infestations.

but they can also introduce harmful contaminants. Neglecting to address this issue results in significant financial losses and damage to any company's reputation, as well as potential fines and legal troubles.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is essential for successful pest management. IPM is a science-based process aimed at identifying and reducing risks associated with pest management strategies.





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IPM is a mindful approach to controlling pests that involves using a variety of techniques. These methods include understanding the life cycles, behaviour, biology and environmental interactions of pests to identify and eliminate the root cause of infestations. By utilising this information along with available pest control methods, IPM aims to manage any damage in the most cost-effective way while minimising risks to people, property, and the environment. This approach utilises all suitable pest management options, including targeted use of pesticides when necessary.

When used correctly, IPM can outperform traditional reactive pest control methods. The crucial factor is partnering with an accredited service provider who thoroughly understands the IPM approach and knows how to tailor it to unique requirements. Attempting a DIY approach is not recommended; it is better to rely on the expertise of professionals like Flick Pest Control.

The importance of using pest control services



Stuart Steele

Stuart Steele, the Customer Relations & Marketing Manager at Flick Services Group emphasises that ongoing and regular maintenance, effective proofing, consistent and good hygiene and housekeeping practices are followed by retailers and commercial building managers is the first step in minimising pest entry and pest



“ The use of pesticides has been widely recognised as hazardous and has the potential to cause harm to both the environment and accidental exposure to humans through inhalation or contact with treated surfaces. ”

Image by Erik Karits, Unsplash

infestation. Ongoing and regular effective targeted pest control can be tailor made, with site specific programmes for an effective pest control plan. Flick introduces an integrated pest management programme (IPM), at all food outlets, supermarkets and retailers.”

The use of pesticides has been widely recognised as hazardous and has the potential to cause harm to both the environment and accidental exposure to humans through inhalation or contact with treated surfaces. The more holistic approach has been increasingly mandated by organisations, municipalities, and schools for their buildings.

IPM typically requires less pesticides. However, the extent of this reduction may depend on the previous pest control practices used before implementing an IPM programme. IPM is a proactive

to dedicate time and procedures to thoroughly clean and disinfect floors and areas that come into contact with food.



Fatdesign, www.canva.com

approach to pest control that prioritises both environmental consciousness and the well-being of employees and customers.

The most crucial and efficient method for managing pests in a food establishment is by upholding a hygienic facility. Pests can be lured by even the tiniest amount of food; it is essential

Litter can be a major culprit. One recommendation is for employees to make a habit of stepping outside at least once a day to remove any litter that may serve as a draw or shelter for pests. This includes items such as wrappers, food scraps, and empty takeout containers, which may seem insignificant but can greatly impact pest control efforts.





By Africa Images, www.canva.com

“ A single image of a pest in a store, such as a rat or a cockroach, can cause significant harm to the reputation of a store or group at a national level. ”

Sanitisation and hygiene

Any business that deals with food must undergo regular and thorough cleaning and sanitisation of equipment, surfaces, utensils, or any area that has contact with the food. This is done to prevent cross-contamination from occurring and to keep the consumer safe.

Like pest control, there are strict regulations surrounding sanitisation and hygiene standards within the food industry. Failure to meet these standards can also lead to significant penalties and even closure.

Sanitisation is critical for reducing the incidence of bacteria, viruses, parasites, or potentially harmful chemical substances accidentally being introduced to the food and the consumer.

It is always wise to reach out to professionals for guidance, for food safety and quality control, Food Safety Agency has a wealth of knowledge in the industry. Louis Visagie, CEO, says ...

“ As an assignee we provide independent services relating to food safety and quality within the consumer market.

Food Safety Agency delivers a complete end-to-end food safety and quality solution in South Africa. ”

Various technological advancements, such as UV sterilisation wands, ozone generators, and

Regular cleaning and sanitisation

- Thoroughly clean and disinfect floors and food contact areas daily.
- Sanitise equipment, surfaces, and utensils that come in contact with food.
- Use colour and picture-coded cloths for different food preparation areas.
- Implement UV-treated antimicrobial cloths for superior cleanliness.
- Implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies.
- Conduct regular inspections and preventative measures.
- Partner with accredited pest control service providers.
- Consider environmentally friendly pest control options.
- Create and maintain a daily cleaning task checklist for employees
- Ensure employees remove litter from outside areas at least once daily
- Train staff on proper hygiene and food safety practices
- Regularly sanitise high-touch areas like trolleys and handbaskets
- Pay special attention to frequently used surfaces and counters
- Consistently service, clear, and sanitise garbage cans, dumpsters, and bins
- Properly manage waste areas to prevent pest attraction
- Eliminate sources of stagnant water to prevent pest breeding
- Conduct regular chemical deep cleaning to remove carbon deposits, grease, and grime
- Schedule professional cleaning services to maintain kitchen equipment.
- Maintain proper temperatures in refrigerated areas.
- Stay updated on guidelines from relevant national departments.
- Utilise technological advancements like UV sterilisation wands and electrostatic sprayers.
- Consider automated cleaning solutions for improved efficiency.
- Maintain records of cleaning activities, pest control measures, and inspections.
- Keep documentation of compliance with food safety regulations.
- Conduct internal hygiene audits regularly.

The presence of stagnant water has various adverse consequences, both internally and externally. It can create a favourable environment for the growth of bacteria and hazardous microorganisms. Additionally, it may lure pests, especially flies and mosquitos, which use this water to deposit their eggs. Once these pests have established themselves, getting rid of them without expert assistance can be challenging.

The influence of social media on pest control cannot be denied. A single image of a pest in a store, such as a rat or a cockroach, can cause significant harm to the reputation of a store or group at a national level. What is concerning is that these posts do not necessarily have to be accurate or recent. Retailers understand that regaining consumer trust after it has been lost is no easy task.





Louis Visagie, CEO Food Safety Agency

electrostatic sprayers, have been implemented to successfully disinfect surfaces and eradicate harmful pathogens. These cutting-edge solutions are vital in upholding cleanliness and promoting overall well-being.

The impact of technology on cleaning has been significant, revolutionising our approach to maintaining cleanliness. With the introduction of automated robots, intelligent cleaning products, and environmentally friendly options, technology has greatly enhanced the efficiency, convenience, and effectiveness of cleaning. As technology continues to progress, it offers a promising future for the cleaning industry, ensuring cleaner and healthier environments for all.

Built on the foundations of four key principles – ERDM, or Exclusion, Restriction, Destruction, and Monitoring – offers a proactive approach that prioritises prevention alongside treatment when properly executed.

Retail and wholesale stores that specialise in FMCG products can often attract pesky creatures, who see them as miniature paradises. The refrigerated areas offer a combination of moisture,

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coolness, and darkness that are ideal for hiding. Dry goods like flour, rice, cake mixes, seeds, nuts, teas, cereal and dog food are particularly appealing to these pests.

Garbage cans, dumpsters, bins in canteens are just as appealing as the skips located at the back of the building. It is crucial to consistently service, clear, and sanitise these areas.

As advised by Sani-touch, hygiene and sanitation experts, it is crucial to establish straightforward processes that cover all areas from food preparation in HMR and deli operations to sanitising floors, counters, and frequently used surfaces.

purpose eco wipes that are both biodegradable and flushable, conveniently dispensed from a wall-mounted unit. These paper-based wipes effectively sanitise both hands and surfaces. It is also essential to thoroughly sanitise high-touch areas like trolleys and handbaskets.

Conducting regular chemical deep cleaning will aid your team in keeping top-notch hygiene standards and prolong the lifespan of your kitchen equipment. This specialised cleaning service effectively eliminates carbon deposits, grease, grime, and solidified oils, reducing the likelihood of cross contamination.

Using colour and picture-coded cloths for food preparation is a simple and efficient method of minimising cross-contamination and cross-infection. Take Sani-touch's UV-treated antimicrobial range, specifically designed for use in food preparation spaces, as an example. These multi-functional cloths are printed with both an image and a word in bright hues to ensure superior cleanliness. They come in various categories, such as bakery, fish, vegetable, meat, deli, coffee, and in high-risk prep areas.

A valuable addition to the sanitation arsenal is multi-



Environmentally friendly choices

Green Pest Control, safe for children, pets and the environment, offers an efficient and compassionate solution that eliminates rodents without the use of poisons or toxins. Pest Managers use eco-friendly pesticides which are 100% biodegradable. Pesticides called synthetic pyrethroids are used to control a wide variety of pests. The pyrethroid insecticides are chemically derived from naturally occurring pyrethrin's taken from pyrethrum which is the resin extract from dried chrysanthemum flowers. Another company dedicated to the environment is Eco Smart Pest Control.

Organisations like the Owl Rescue Centre can also offer guidance on other methods of managing

rats and mice. All of these choices have one thing in common – the need for no poisons to be used. This is a necessary measure due to the unfortunate reality of secondary poisoning.

A comprehensive solution for both hygiene and pest control

The connection between pest control and hygiene remains strong, creating considerable obstacles for retailers and wholesalers. Fortunately, with the assistance of skilled industry allies and practical solutions, implementing IPM programmes can be a smooth process. In Southern Africa's dynamic food industry, staying compliant with hygiene standards is non-negotiable.



It's not just about adhering to regulations; it's about ensuring the well-being of consumers and building a brand that creates trust. **SR**

Sources:

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