

Pests

These resources provide a comprehensive learning module to understand the reasons of practical food safety procedures. They are ideally suited to a wide range of learners, as they more than fulfill the requirements of Basic Food Hygiene (NVQ Level 2) and so provide the resources to meet the mandatory requirement for all FE and HE hospitality students to obtain this qualification.

Through an understanding of the scientific reasons for a food safety the student achieves the knowledge of how to manage food safety in an operational unit and also from the large company's perspective for the implementation of HACCP, making the resource suitable for HE students to enter management roles in industry.

Contents

Section 1. Learning Outcomes	1
Section 2. Food Hazards Created By Pests and Animals	2
Section 3. Most Common Pests	2
Cockroaches	2
Rodents- Rats and Mice	2
Action must be taken	3
Section 4. Flies	3
Section 5. Household Pets	3
Section 6. Pest Prevention	3
Section 7. Key Points - Revision	4
Section 8. Safe Food Handling Practices	4
Credits	6

Awareness and prevention of contamination of food by pests such as flies, rodents and domestic pets is covered within this resource.

Section 1. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this section you will have learnt:

1. What are the main kitchen pests,
2. Why pests are a dangerous hazard,
3. How to detect the presence of pests,
4. Why pests are attracted to kitchens,
5. How to prevent pest infestation,
6. Why domestic pets can be a kitchen hazard

Section 2. Food Hazards Created By Pests and Animals

Pests are dangerous.

You may not at first think of mice and cockroaches as dangerous - but they are! Remember in Part 3 where a child died from Salmonella carried by mouse faeces.

Not surprisingly more restaurants are closed because of pest infestation, than for any other reason. It is always a sign of a poorly run kitchen and very non-professional standards.

Have you ever seen pests or signs of pests in a kitchen or a place where food is stored?

Pests will always try to set up home - where they can find warmth and food. Both of these are always found in kitchens.

This is why it is vital to clean as you go and to clean completely at the end of each shift so all food debris is removed. Food left behind cabinets and in those awkward nooks and crannies can too easily become an invitation for pests to set up home.

Section 3. Most Common Pests

Cockroaches

One of the most common pests in kitchens is the cockroach.

Cockroach egg cases can carry more than thirty eggs, so a colony is soon started. Cockroaches crawl over food spreading dangerous bacteria. Bacteria fall from their bodies. Cockroaches and other pests are living contamination vehicles, giving bacteria and other harmful organisms a free ride to end up on our food.

Cockroaches hide behind cabinets, cracks, pipe ducts and in the walls and under the floors of buildings. These insects enjoy a warm environment (not surprisingly kitchens and boiler rooms are their favourites) and are most active at night.

Their presence can be detected by a dry dusty mouldy smell, smear marks and faeces pellets.
Cockroaches

More than 40 dangerous bacteria (pathogens) have been found on cockroaches which drop from their bodies as they crawl over food. Therefore all food possibly contaminated must be discarded and all remnants of body skins and fecal matter must be cleaned away immediately.

A colony of cockroaches must be immediately destroyed by professional exterminators. The name and address of exterminators should be kept available so that an appointment can be made at the earliest moment.

Rodents- Rats and Mice

Rodents leave their tell tale signs by droppings, gnawing marks, holes in cereal bags, holes and nesting sites and the sighting of dead or living animals.

Rodents will venture into stores and the damage can be considerable, they can be found in cereal bags such as rice, flour etc.

If you ever find any such damage dispose of all supplies you think may have been contaminated.

Remember you will not be able to salvage any food item as it will have been contaminated by which are likely to carry dangerous bacteria such as Salmonella (which killed a child).

You must report any such sightings immediately to your supervisor who should make an appointment for a professional exterminator.

Action must be taken

Tell your supervisor if you even suspect that there may be signs of cockroaches and rodents on the premises

Everyone working on the premises must be aware of the signs of cockroaches and rodents (rats and mice).

Rodents like cockroaches, carry a variety of dangerous diseases including food poisoning pathogens, and so must be kept away from areas of food preparation and storage.

Premises infested with these animals are usually immediately closed down.

Section 4. Flies

Flies are dangerous!

Do you know what happens when a fly lands on your food?

- First it vomits.
- Then it dances to work the vomit (with digestive juices) into a gooey mess - yuk!
- As the fly dances, bacteria drop from its hairy legs- this bacteria was collected from feces and dead animals.
- When the mixture of vomit is good and yuk - they suck it up -yummy!
- And vomit!

Now it's your turn to eat the food- Bon Appétit!

Many diseases are carried by flies, they are a constant cause of cross-contamination and so are a serious hazard to food safety. All flies must be prevented from entering a kitchen and any that do must be attracted and killed by an electric fly zapper. Air curtains are an excellent way of preventing flies from entering a kitchen.

Yet, as these beasts are so dangerous, more than one system must be used.

But remember that you must not use *pesticides* in or near the kitchen.

Section 5. Household Pets

Why Cats and dogs must be kept away from food.

Pets such as dogs and cats must be kept far away from areas of food preparation and storage. For these animals carry bacteria on their coat and paws, again cats and dogs are contamination vehicles.

It has been found that domestic cats and dogs can carry the deadly strain of E.Coli this highlights the serious hazard create animals in the kitchen. A cat walking around areas of food production is a certain way of causing cross-contamination which will lead to a serious food poisoning outbreak.

Section 6. Pest Prevention

The Importance of Regular Inspections.

Regular inspections of kitchens and service areas are important.

Rodents will inevitably venture into a premises, and on finding food and nesting facilities, will soon start an infestation.

To prevent such an infestation a clean kitchen and service areas are vital.

Make sure no food is dropped in shafts awkward to clean places. This is another reason why food should only be consumed in a regularly cleaned dining room.

It is your responsible to ensure that your work area is always clean and never presents an opportunity for rodents, insects or any pests to make a home.

For example mice breed very quickly and carry bacteria: as many as 2000 offspring can come from just one adult pair in a year.

If you see one pest it is a sure sign that there are several more!

Section 7. Key Points - Revision

1. No food premise is allowed to operate with a pest infestation.
2. Rodents and cockroaches carry many bacteria and easily spread harmful diseases to man.
3. Rodents and cockroaches will naturally try to find a habitable environment that includes warmth and food. Kitchens are naturally warm, but a clean kitchen offers less opportunity.
4. It is most important that all members of the team are instructed to be on the look out for such pests. Especially all staff who are responsible for the storage of food.
5. Always use a professional exterminator: it is essential that no food is contaminated by the poisons.

Section 8. Safe Food Handling Practices

Daily Routine;

1. It is advisable to have a continuous contract with an exterminator who will place bait traps in safe locations around the premises. This will prevent an infestation from starting in the first place.
2. The manager should regularly question person responsible for storing food to see if they have observed any signs of infestation. This questioning with the reply should ideally be recorded in the managers weekly/monthly report, this again demonstrates "due diligence".
3. All persons in the team should be reminded to be on the look out and immediately report any sightings.
4. Never attempt to salvage any food that may have been contaminated by pests, the risks are far too great. Always record all food you dispose of (you should discount this

from the kitchen's financial performance figures such as kitchen profit).

5. At no time should pets be allowed in the kitchen, storage areas or any other areas where persons or items concerned with food preparation are found.
6. In care homes and other establishments where pets are on the premises, they must be prevented from coming into contact with the kitchen areas.
7. All persons responsible for handling food must avoid contact with any pet, and if this occurs wash your hands thoroughly and even change the protective uniform. In addition no animal food is to be stored in refrigerators or in storage areas used for food.
8. Absolutely - no partly used pet food such as an opened can is to be stored any where close to food for human consumption. The reason is that cross contamination from persons, especially patients can be carried by pet food cans to food for human consumption. This will lead to a serious and dangerous food poisoning outbreak. The dangerous strain of E.Coli 0157 is one particular bacteria which can be transmitted in this way.

Credits

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