

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET



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How to Select and Use Pest Control Services

Selecting a pest control service is just as important as selecting other professional services. You should seek the same high degree of competence and ethics as you would expect from your doctor, lawyer, dentist or insurance agent.

A good place to start is to ask a neighbor or friend to recommend a company. When someone you know has used pest control services, you may want to ask about the type of problem encountered and how satisfied he was with the result. He may also have information on price, warranty and other important facts.

A professional company has an established, fixed place of business. Membership in the National, State or Long Island Pest Control Association is a good sign that the company is established and has access to modern technical and management information on quality service. Such associations also have codes of ethics that members agree to abide by. You can call the Long Island Pest Control Association for a referral from their membership list (631-399-4541). Discuss prospective companies with your local Better Business Bureau, Chamber of Commerce or Consumer Affairs office.

Be sure of satisfaction

Your satisfaction will be assured if you fully understand:

1. The pest(s) to be controlled.
2. The extent of infestation.
3. The work necessary to solve the problem.
4. The Materials Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and product labeling for each pesticide product to be used.
5. The warranty (guarantee) covering the work done: what it covers, period of time it covers, what you must do to keep it in force, etc.
6. The contract you sign: is it clear to you? Are the terms spelled out? Are all blanks filled in?

7. What is and is not covered. Remember, there is a limit to what you can expect from your pest control specialist. He will use technical skills and knowledge to do his best for you. Ask what you can reasonably expect from him. Ask what steps you must take before and after the service has been performed to make sure you receive maximum results.
8. Keeping appointments with your specialist will expedite your pest control program. Cancel scheduled service only when necessary.
9. Special instructions: do you have to leave the premises during treatment? Do your cupboards have to be empty prior to treatment? Should you remove pets, etc.?

Inspections

All pest control programs should begin with an inspection designed to identify pests or potential pest problems. An inspection may indicate an application of chemicals is not needed. This responsible opinion is as much a part of your pest control service as a pesticide application. Your professional's knowledge and training will help him explain the situation to you. Ask questions until you understand. While it is the technician's responsibility to keep you informed, it is advisable that you do some independent reading on the subject.

After a general pest or termite inspection, your specialist will provide you with information on:

- ✓ Sanitary conditions that may invite infestations.
- ✓ The extent and location of a pest problem found at the time of the inspection.
- ✓ Existing or potential avenues of entry for a pest infestation.

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- ✓ Structural deficiencies serving as actual or potential breeding sites for insects, rodents and other pests. Examples are: cracks, crevices or holes in walls and screens, broken tiles, voids, crawl spaces.)
- ✓ The elements of your pest prevention and control program and the steps it includes.
- ✓ If your home has never been treated for termites, you may wish to subscribe to an annual inspection even if your home is not currently infested.

After initial treatment

Whether you have a rodent, general insect pest or a termite problem, continued prevention and control is important. You should make arrangements for continuing inspections to ensure a healthy environment. Here are some suggestions:

Insect and rodent pest problems

1. Arrange for regular inspections of your premises.
2. Follow your specialist's sanitation recommendations.
3. Consider the professional's recommendation to treat with pesticides where appropriate. You are paying for his knowledge. Be sure to get a Materials Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) far enough in advance for you to discuss the proposed treatment with the pest control service and make an informed decision. Periodic reinspection may be a recommendation after some treatments. Your peace of mind is the goal of a good pest control program.
4. Follow special instructions designed to protect your food, household objects, pets and the general safety of your family.

Termite problems

1. Provide the termite control specialist easy access to all areas of your property to be sure work can be done thoroughly.
2. Take advantage of annual inspections to make sure the initial treatment is still effective.
3. Do not destroy evidence before an inspection. Do not sweep or vacuum wings, droppings or saw dust.
4. If you have made any alterations to your structure - such as new additions, porches, garage slabs, finished basement, etc., or the treated soil around these has been disturbed - make arrangements for inspection and treatment to continue the protection of your home or business against termites. In many cases a warranty may be invalidated if **any** structural alterations are made without prior notice to the servicing company. Pre-treatment of new construction is by far the best method of protection against termites.

Important points

- ✓ As of 1977, federal law requires pest control companies to have supervisory personnel certified by the state. Some state and local authorities also license pest control companies.
- ✓ Part 325 of the Rules and Regulations relating to the application of pesticides was revised as of January 21, 2000. The new revisions to this law went into effect as of January, 2000. There are now three levels of applicator, as follows:
 - a) Certified Commercial Pesticide Applicator is certified by the DEC (Dept. of Environmental Conservation) to use or supervise the use of any pesticide in any category of use covered by the individual's certification, e.g. Category 3 – Trees, Shrubs, Turf; Category 7 – Termites, etc.
 - b) Certified Commercial Pesticide Technician is certified to engage in the commercial use of any general use or unclassified pesticide without supervision, e.g. horticultural oil, insecticidal soap. They may use any pesticides (including restricted use) when under the direct supervision of a CCPA. Technicians cannot supervise apprentices.
 - c) Commercial Pesticide Apprentice must meet training requirements in section 325.10 and work under the direct supervision of a CCPA.
- ✓ Buy value, not price. If the price quoted seems too high or too low, don't hesitate to secure other estimates. What appears to be a real bargain may merit a second look. A higher price may turn out to be the best buy.
- ✓ Support of research in colleges and universities by the pest control industry has resulted in tremendous growth in professionalism, technical skills and training.
- ✓ Obtain information on your specific pest problem. Request fact sheets from Cooperative Extension. Visit your public library and check on **Common Sense Pest Control** by W. Olkowski, S. Daar and H. Olkowski, published by Taunton Press, 1991. The ISBN is 0-942391-63-2.

Effective control of pest problems requires knowledge of inspection and problem solving techniques and the selection and application of control measures. Your cooperation will enhance the pest control program you select.

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