

## Business Advisory Sheet 12

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### Eradicating Cockroaches in Food Premises



*Blattella germanica*  
(German Cockroach)  
Adult is 12mm in length



*Blatta orientalis*  
(Oriental Cockroach)  
Adult is 22mm in length

Cockroaches carry most of the major food poisoning organisms in their gut and because some species can climb they are likely to contaminate food, drink, equipment and all areas of a premises. Where a member of the Environmental Health Team has identified an infestation of cockroaches at a food premises, it is most important to control the infestation as quickly as possible, to remove risk to health and risk to foodstuffs. Any infestation is a serious matter and must be eradicated as quickly as possible. Food businesses will normally close to allow treatment to be carried out.

Eradicating this insect pest is extremely difficult and owners of businesses are therefore strongly advised to follow these instructions:

- Throw away any opened foods as they may have become contaminated by this pest. Ensure that other food items are stored in easily cleanable pest proof containers, off the floor.
- Thoroughly clean the premises from top to bottom i.e. walls, floors, ceilings and fixtures and fittings. This includes the dismantling of all catering machinery to remove all traces of grease and food debris. There must be nothing left for the insects to eat.

As soon as these tasks are complete you will need to employ the services of a competent pest control contractor to provide a course of treatment. You can contact the Council's pest control department on 0161 770 4509, alternatively look in the Yellow Pages under "*Pest and Vermin Control Services*". You may wish to enquire whether the company is a member of the British Pest Control Association. We would expect the treatment to include the following:

- All areas of the premises should be treated with a residual insecticide (when the insecticide has been applied you should take great care not to wash it off whilst cleaning).
- The contractor will need to gain access to all cavities in walls, floors, ceilings, fixtures and fittings, cable trunking and ducting to enable these areas to be treated with insecticide.
- All equipment should be dismantled (particularly equipment that produces heat i.e. dishwashing machines, ice machines, refrigerators) to enable treatment with insecticide.

**Care – insecticide must be kept away from open food and drink**

## Eradicating Cockroaches in Food Premises (continued)

- Insect detector pheromone traps should be positioned in strategic places throughout the premises to monitor the extent of the infestation. The traps should be monitored on a daily basis and a running total of the number of insects caught, together with the date of the inspection, should be recorded on the reverse of the trap.

**Care - you must ensure that the traps are not disturbed during cleaning**

It may take at least a week to control the infestation but you can help the situation by allowing your pest control contractor ready access to all areas of the premises. In addition you should contact your pest control contractor **immediately** if you have identified a large “catch” on any of the detector traps (this indicates a local “hot spot” and the surrounding area requires immediate treatment).

Your pest control contractor can also use ‘gel’ type treatments to treat the premises. The ‘gel’ kills the cockroaches once they have consumed it. This would usually be used in specific areas, after the premises has been sprayed with a residual insecticide.

It should be noted that cockroaches can hide in very small spaces e.g. behind wall tiles, so it is important to make good any structural defects such as loose or damaged tiles. They also like to inhabit warm, moist environments such as refrigerator and freezer motors, so these areas should be actively monitored.

Even when you believe the infestation is under control we would seriously recommend that you retain the services of the pest control contractor. Any surviving cockroaches can quickly re-infest the premises and therefore you will need to be vigilant.

When your contractor informs you that the infestation is under control then you should contact the Officer for further advice (e.g. with respect to reopening the business, if you have been closed during this period). However, please feel free to contact the Officer at any time if there are issues you do not understand or if you would like further advice.

Each day before opening for business the following tasks **must** be performed:

- All surfaces which come into contact with food or hands must be thoroughly cleaned. To do this effectively, we recommend that an **antibacterial cleaner** is used to sanitise these areas.
- All glasses, crockery, cutlery, catering utensils should be washed (preferably in a dishwasher).
- All catering equipment must be cleaned and sanitised.
- Your employees should be fully aware of the food safety hazards caused by the infestation and receive appropriate training. At all times they should practice good personal hygiene, which includes frequent hand washing.
- At the end of the working day the premises should be thoroughly cleaned so that no food debris is left for the cockroaches to eat.

Finally, if the cockroach infestation re-establishes itself then you **must** contact the Officer immediately, for additional advice.

## **Eradicating Cockroaches in Food Premises (continued)**

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### **Contact**

For further advice/information please contact:

Oldham Council, Food Safety, Chadderton Town Hall, Middleton Road, Chadderton,  
Oldham OL9 6PP on Telephone 0161 770 2244 or email [env.foodsafety@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:env.foodsafety@oldham.gov.uk)