



**Your expertise and experience can prevent your client from sacrificing their reputation as well as the health of their customers.**

## CRUMBS, COCKROACH CONTROL CAPE TOWN KITCHENS!

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Licking the last of the salt and vinegar off of his fingertips and tossing the empty styrofoam container into the bin, the unsuspecting businessman headed back to the office feeling satisfied after a delicious takeaway from the corner fish and chip shop. Luckily the shop had been busy so he didn't linger too long at the front counter when placing his order, because if he had, he might've noticed the skin-crawling sight of a kitchen overrun by cockroaches!

Excessively greasy fryers, dirty containers and utensils, and discarded buckets filled with grey water and greasy rags. Broken wall and floor tiles, food debris behind and under appliances, and food in uncovered containers were noted. Damp, dirty cardboard boxes kicked under counters and soggy pieces of fried food caught in plug holes. An earthy smell of cockroaches in all stages of their life cycle – some dead, a lot alive – lingered in the air. Empty egg capsules and spattered droppings were visible from within the warm hiding spots of a dishwashing machine.

This was the sight that greeted our small group of pest control operators upon investigating food-handling sites to see first-hand what the fuss that many Western Cape pest control companies were making concerning the severity of cockroach infestations on clients' premises.

Our group was small because we had strict instructions to keep it that way by a nervous shop owner and we were also instructed to not take photographs or video footage. We weren't there to expose the obvious conditions, we were there to identify problems and put our heads together to solve them for the sake of our industry. Whilst initial concern of insecticide resistance, insecticide aversion and poor application methods could well be a cause, the general consensus was poor sanitation and hygiene.

Many of our restaurants, takeaway joints, coffee shops and cafés in the Western Cape don't appear to

be putting much emphasis on good housekeeping: Overflowing garbage bags are being left behind back doors and in alleyways - an oasis for vermin. Bags of potatoes are being piled high from floor to ceiling in back of house areas, making it inaccessible to clean or apply pest control methods sufficiently behind and underneath. General maintenance like leaking taps and clogged pipes are not being timeously attended to, and kitchens are in a general state of disrepair.

Are you, the SAPCA pest control operator, communicating your findings to your clients, and are you making sensible and practical suggestions to better improve their hygiene and sanitation? Your expertise and experience can prevent your client from sacrificing their reputation as well as the health of their customers. So, what suggestions can you make to better improve hygiene and sanitation on site? Here are just a few examples:

### .1.

- Provide staff with a hand-washing area with hot water, antibacterial soap and paper towels. Encourage staff to wash hands regularly during their shifts and to wear protective gloves, hairnets and hats.
- Clean tables, furniture and floors where customers sit and eat, regularly with disinfectant.
- Clean spills immediately in appliances like microwaves, stoves, ovens and food processors. Remember to clean rubber seals in fridge doors and freezers.
- Place garbage in good quality bags, seal sufficiently, and place bags in designated bins with lids. Scrub bins regularly and spray with an antibacterial spray.
- Schedule regular 'spring cleaning' sessions - preferably outside of business working hours. Unpack all shelves, cupboards, fridges and freezers and discard unwanted items. Scrub

surfaces, walls and floors thoroughly.

- Pack dry food items in sealed containers, on a shelving system and allow sufficient space all around for cleaning and applying pesticide.
- Provide staff with a designated cloak room with lockable cages for personal items, hooks on walls for jackets, and dirt bins. Cloak rooms should to be cleaned regularly.

### .2.

- Draw clients' attention to the requirements of SANS 10049 related to Food Safety Management through the implementation of essential programs of Maintenance / Hygiene and Pest Control as well as the limitations placed on the Pest Management Company in SANS 10133 – The guidelines relates to the application of pesticides within a food handling / processing facility.
- Clients' should insist that their suppliers (fresh produce, packaging, etc.) have a professional pest control program in place. Failure to do this can render treatments ineffective if fresh infestations are being re-introduced on to site by contaminated raw materials and packaging delivered by suppliers. It is essential that all deliveries be inspected for signs of infestation prior to introduction onto site. Assist your client with basic training as to what to look for.

Furthermore, pest control operators should remember that in order to avoid insect resistance, don't apply the same insecticide, in the same place, every service visit. Rotate insecticides and speak to suppliers about the different modes of killing action of each insecticide. Consider the palatability of each insecticide as well to avoid bait aversion.

Go back to basics and be mindful of the three resources that a pest requires to thrive namely food, water and harbourage. Try a non-chemical approach and practise integrated pest management like vacuuming, heat treatment and trapping.