

Pest Control Management

By Howard McKew, P.E., C.P.E.

Building management is responsible to protect their building asset investment. To satisfy this business and occupant health mandate, ownership must have an annual pest control plan, and this will require budgeting each year in the area of:

- Bird management outdoors
- Rodent management outdoors / indoors
- Termite management outdoors
- Landscaping management of pests

Without adequate attention and commitment to this mandate, the facility will be challenged from a variety of pests in the lawn, trees, and bushes, around the building perimeter, on the building, and inside the building. The consequences to be paid first and foremost is the potential health risks from the presence of various pests that can lead to Lyme disease, salmonella, etc. that may result in occupants health being affected from allergies and/or asthma.

Each of the categories above require some investment via an annual budget. To begin the budget process, study the pest control situation by learning more about the numerous bugs, rodents, etc. that can infiltrate the building. Empowered by this information, apply quality control method of:

- Identify the problem
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Solution planning
- Solution implementation
- Monitor and measure the results
- Improve the process

Assessing the situation (solution planning) may require the assistance of a pest control authority to complete the walk-around using a standardized checklist of what to look for. Solution implementation should be to



separate the pest control tasks into two categories with the first category being, “assigned to complete by in-house personnel” and the second category being, “contract this service.”

There are several tasks that can be performed by in-house staff, such as completing on a regular basis a walk-around, e.g., ensure garbage and trash are enclosed within containers and storage outdoors in a secured enclosure.

This in-house category is a discussion worth having to minimize the operating cost to perform these assignments on a regularly scheduled period during the year. The second category, contracting the services of a professional, trained, and certified pest control company, should be those tasks more skilled individuals are able to do safely. Worth noting, when it comes to the uses of chemicals to prevent pest infestation, it is suggested that outside contractors do this work because it is not only the handling of the chemicals but, also the safe disposal of the depleted chemicals.

Helpful Hints-Bird Management Outdoors:

Pest control management of building assets start with birds that are a nuisance to the area around a building. Birds such as sparrows and pigeons can be a problem if they can find water and food source close to a facility. This entices these birds to routinely visit as they perch on the building, safely remaining out of sight in bushes, and nesting in trees closes to the building. Decorative bird baths will also attract the likes of sparrows, as well as the much preferred songbirds.

To this issue, management will need to have a plan to monitor the nests being built by birds and remove them. To enforce “not feeding” birds, a notice should be posted on a building bulletin board stating, “Please do not feed birds.” Also, consider heavily pruning bushes and installing wire spikes in locations where birds will want to perch, e.g., windowsill and roof gutters.

Helpful Hints-Rodent Management Outdoors:

Another pest that will try and make its way into a building are rodents. Drawn to buildings, management must have a plan to secure trash, especially food outdoors to prevent rats, raccoons, mice, and skunks from working their way into the trash containers outside. Stopping pests before they get in is the best plan for rodent control inside a building! The prevention solution is probably a joint venture between daily trash/garbage management by the maintenance staff in sync with a pest control firm regularly scheduled treatment of chemicals and traps outside the building.

Helpful Hints-Rodent Management Indoors:

If rodents, especially rats, mice, and squirrels get into the building, they create a need for a totally different pest prevention plan. Once inside a building it is probably time for management to contract the services of a professional and leave this expertise up to the contractor.

Helpful Hints-Termite Management Outdoors:

If there are signs of termites around the building perimeter, then it is safe to say these destructive pests will work their way inside soon. Like the rodent control approach noted above, the management solution should be to contract the services of a professional to not only kill the bugs and destroy the nests, but to also prevent further infiltration of termites arriving from the outdoors. Termites will be drawn to buildings, especially wooden structures, wood installed on top of concrete

foundations, moisture from within and cracks in building foundations.

Helpful Hints-Landscaping Management of Pests:

Here is where building operations can create their own landscape pest control management in-house or contract out the services to a landscaping contractor. The challenge to keeping the tasks in-house will be the commitment of time, personnel, inventory of supplies and equipment, and a set schedule spanning Spring through Fall. But, if this criteria can't be met, then a contractor should be assigned the job to treat the lawn with safe chemicals that attacks pests but does not harm other animals, e.g., dogs walking across the lawn.

For more on approaching the topic of budgeting, please refer to *Focus On Facilities*, Facility Management 2022 column, September “[Budgeting Annual Planned Maintenance & Deferred Maintenance](#)”.

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