

Fighting Back Against Pests The 4 Key Concepts Of Successful Pest Control

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There are four basic interconnected concepts within pest control. When followed correctly, they help minimize pest challenges.

Concept 1: The One-Third Responsibility Rule

The responsible party for eliminating or minimizing pests in a restaurant or retail store depends on perspective. Through an operator's lens, he or she would say it is the pest company's responsibility. Through the pest company's lens, it would say it needs the tenant's help to control pest. Finally, the landlord would say it is the tenant's responsibility.

Who is right?

Facility managers do not take sides. Our responsibility is to work with all parties. The correct answer is all parties are responsible, and they are interconnected, as shown in Figure 1. The responsibility lays more on the operator (tenants) at 33.34 percent.

Concept 2: Basic Needs to Survive (Humans and Pests)

Water, food and shelter are the basic needs for us to survive. The same is true for pests, which is why pests are attracted to your restaurants. Eliminating these elements helps your restaurants eliminate or minimize pests.

Concept 3: Humans and Pests Adjust to Their Environment

Imagine a building with two adjoining rooms and a shared door in the middle of the desert. There are no other buildings around for hundreds of miles. Naturally, we would go into the room that is coolest. When it warms up, we move to the next coolest room. Let's take this concept and apply it to pests. If a pest company treats an establishment, but the walls adjoin with a tenant next door, the pests would move next door until it is clear to come back.

Concept 4: Layers of Defense

Let's use a fundamental concept from the loss-prevention world and apply it to the pest trade: layers of defense.

To minimize crime, we create layers of defense. These layers of defense start from the exterior to the interior:

Layer 1. Parking lot lighting

Layer 2. Door locks

Layer 3. Burglar alarms

Layer 4. CCTV

Layer 5. Leaving register drawers open without cash

Layer 6. Safes

Instead of money, pests value food, water and shelter. So the big question is this: How do we create layers of defense against pests? Let's start with the exterior and work our way into the store (also seen in Fig. 2):

Layer 1. Maintain landscapes so that nothing is overgrown, and ensure there are no parking lot cracks. Do not leave food/grease debris out, do not leave any trash overnight and close the lid to the dumpster.

Layer 2. Seal all cracks and holes. Make sure the doors have proper seals, such as weather strips and door sweeps, and the vents have proper screens.

Layer 3. Seal all cracks and holes in interior walls.

Layer 4. Clean up all debris and grease buildup throughout the day, and place lids on containers that store dirty towels and trash. Your closing crew plays a vital role in minimizing pests in your store, as well as ensuring the entire store is properly cleaned. Pests often come out after the staff leaves.

In summary, we must take the first step by owning the pest issue. We also must take the necessary steps to upkeep the facility and the store's hygiene. Work with your pest control and landlord partners to apply the four layers of defense in order to minimize pest issues. As Tony Robbins says, "Knowledge is not power. Knowing a concept is only potential value. The execution of knowledge is where your power lies."

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