

How to Reduce Pests When Offering Outdoor Dining

Food, clutter, grease stains and odors can attract rodents and other pests. If your restaurant is offering outdoor dining, follow these tips to keep your dining spaces clean and rodent-free:

- Inspect the outdoor dining space, garbage areas and any planters or earthen spaces daily to make sure they are clean and that no food residue or signs of rodents are present. If you have a raised platform, make sure to inspect the area underneath it — using a flashlight, as needed.
- If you see signs of rodent activity, such as droppings or rodent burrows, call a pest professional.
 - If you have a raised platform, have the pest professional install tamper-resistant rodent bait stations beneath it and monitor the area.
 - If burrow holes are present in planters, empty the containers and refill with a loose aggregate fill like gravel or sand.
- Wash all outdoor dining areas (including the space underneath a raised platform) and the sidewalks and curbs around your restaurant regularly with soap and water, or a 10 percent bleach solution (1 cup of bleach to 2 gallons of water). This solution is not for food contact surfaces.
- Remove any standing water from around your restaurant.
- Promptly clean up and discard any spilled food.
- Line garbage cans with 1.9-millimeter-thick, heavy-duty plastic bags. Place a rag soaked with a 10 percent bleach solution at the bottom of each bag before you fill with garbage and place another soaked rag on the top before tying the bag tightly to minimize leakage. Place bags in hard plastic or metal garbage containers with tight-fitting lids.
- Make sure you have enough garbage cans to hold trash for at least three days between pick-ups.
- Bring garbage cans and bags to the curb as close to pick-up time as possible. Arrange specific pick-up times with your carter to reduce the time garbage is available to outdoor pests.

For more information on pest prevention in restaurants, see:

- [Rat Prevention: Food Service Establishments](#)
- [Best Practices for Pest Proofing Food Service Establishments](#)