

food MATTERS

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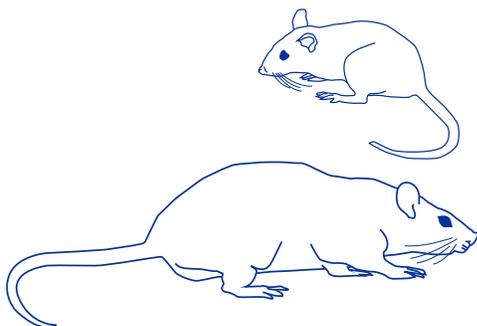
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Controlling Rodents and Other Pests

Food service establishments are especially vulnerable to rodents and other pests because they provide a continuous source of food, shelter and warmth.

Restaurants can control rodent and other pest problems by using a method known as integrated pest management (IPM). IPM helps you monitor where rodents and other pests might live, take steps to prevent them and use targeted treatment methods to control them.

When looking for signs of rodents, inspect your restaurant to locate openings larger than a quarter inch, including where utilities enter.



Let your pest management company know immediately if you see any of the following, which may be signs of an active rodent problem:

- Rodent feces or urine
- Rub or smudge marks (dark, greasy smears against baseboards and openings)
- Runways (paths rodents use, leaving smudge marks along walls and baseboards)
- Burrows (tunnels where rodents live, often seen as 1-inch to 4-inch holes in dirt or concrete)
- Gnaw marks
- Holes or cracks in the walls
- Holes in the sidewalks in front of the restaurant

Use these best practices to help prevent rodents and other pests:

- **Clean pests out:** Keep kitchen and storage areas free of food waste, dirt and dust. Use garbage containers with tight-fitting lids.



- **Starve pests out:** Keep vegetables and grains in pest-resistant containers with tight-fitting lids. Promptly clean up and discard spilled foods.
- **Seal pests out:** Seal all holes and cracks in your restaurant. Use screens on open windows and doors, and add sweeps to the bottom of doors to prevent rodents from entering.
- **Hire a licensed pest management professional:** To find a pest management professional, visit nyc.gov/health and search for **operating a restaurant**.

For more information, see **Best Practices for Pest Proofing: Food Service Establishments**.

Protecting the Hearing of Staff and Customers

Noise is the leading complaint in New York City’s (NYC) 311 system, with more than 20,000 complaints made about loud bars, clubs and restaurants in 2017. Exposure to loud noise (85 decibels or higher) over time can cause hearing loss, high blood pressure, ulcers, tiredness and stress. If staff or customers have to shout to be heard, noise levels are too high.

Here are some tips for reducing noise exposure in your food service establishment:

- Lower the volume of music in the kitchen and dining areas.
- Consider installing design features that reduce noise, such as acoustic panels.
- Move noisy equipment, such as ice and soda machines, away from dining areas.
- When possible, purchase quieter versions of equipment, such as ice machines, compressors and dishwashers.
- Locate wait stations, which can be noisy, away from dining areas, and consider putting partitions around them.
- Soundproof kitchen doors.
- Put rubber caps on chair legs.
- Make sure your heating and air conditioning equipment is working well. Poorly maintained equipment can be noisy.
- Offer hearing protection for customers in noisy areas.



More useful information:

- The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulates noise levels in the workplace. If your restaurant or bar has high noise levels, you may be required to implement a **hearing conservation program** for your employees.
- A noise consultant can help you determine if noise levels are too high, identify noise sources and provide tips to reduce noise.
 - Email onsite@labor.ny.gov to request a free and confidential noise consultation from the New York State Department of Labor.

- Hire a **sound assessment consultant** from the NYC Department of Environmental Protection’s approved list.

For more information, visit nyc.gov/health and search for **restaurant noise**.

Vibriosis Cases at a Brooklyn Restaurant

The New York City Health Department responds to complaints from anyone who believes they became sick after eating in a restaurant. These investigations can identify illness outbreaks and reveal poor food safety practices.

The Health Department responded to reports of illness in people who ate at a Brooklyn restaurant, and identified *Vibrio* as the cause. *Vibrio* is a bacteria found in coastal waters where oysters live. Because oysters eat by filtering water, bacteria from the water can grow inside the oyster. When someone eats raw or undercooked oysters, they can get vibriosis, which causes abdominal cramping, nausea, fever, vomiting and diarrhea. Other foods can become contaminated with *Vibrio* through cross contamination in the kitchen. The Health Department tested the oysters sold at the restaurant and found that they contained *Vibrio*.



To reduce the risk of vibriosis, you must:

- Provide a written consumer advisory to customers, alerting them to the increased risk of foodborne illness from eating raw or undercooked foods.
- Use separate utensils and cutting boards when handling raw and cooked foods.
- Keep shellfish tags for at least

90 days. If a foodborne illness is reported, the tags are used to identify where the shellfish came from.

- Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces and areas where food is stored, prepared and served.
- Maintain appropriate food temperatures during food storage, preparation and transport.
- Immediately report customer complaints of food poisoning by calling 311.

A Change in the Penal Code

It is a crime (i.e., a class D felony of assault in the second degree) to intentionally cause physical injury to New York City public health sanitarians who are performing their duties. The Governor signed New York State Senate Bill 3343, amending New York Penal Law Section 120.05, into law on November 20, 2015.



Food Safety Challenge

1. Which of the following is not a sign of an active rodent problem?

- A. A choking prevention poster
- B. Rodent feces or urine
- C. Gnaw marks
- D. Holes or cracks in the walls

2. To prevent pests in your restaurant, you should:

- A. Clean pests out
- B. Starve pests out
- C. Seal pests out
- D. All of the above

3. To reduce the risk of vibriosis, you must:

- A. Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces and areas where food is stored, prepared and served
- B. Alert customers in writing about the increased risk of foodborne illness from eating raw or undercooked foods
- C. Use separate utensils and cutting boards when handling raw and cooked foods
- D. All of the above

4. Which of the following is a sign that your restaurant is too loud?

- A. The heating and air conditioning equipment is well-maintained
- B. Your staff or customers have to shout to be heard
- C. The ice and soda machines are located away from the dining areas
- D. There is background music playing

5. To reduce noise in your restaurant, do all of the following except:

- A. Put rubber caps on chair legs
- B. Place wait stations near dining areas
- C. Consider installing acoustic panels
- D. Lower the music volume in kitchen and dining areas



Did You Know?

- 1) Renewing your permit online is easy. Visit nyc.gov/dohmhpermits. Registration is required. Payment can only be made by credit or debit card.
- 2) Interested in resources the City offers to businesses? Visit nyc.gov/business.
- 3) Settle a food service establishment violation. If you receive an offer of settlement, you may save money by accepting it. Visit nyc.gov/business and click on the Violations tab.
- 4) Your establishment will get fewer violations if more of your staff learn food safety practices. For more information about the food protection course, visit nyc.gov/healthacademy.
- 5) Need information about opening and operating a food service establishment in NYC? Visit nyc.gov/health/foodservice.