FOCUS on FACILITIES
Diocese of Cleveland Facilities Services Corporation

Pest Control Preventive Maintenance

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

Pest control in and around a building is an integral part of facility management. Pests are part of nature and sometimes they are good to have, e.g., lady bugs that help by ridding the area of other bugs that do damage and sometimes they are not so good to have around, e.g., termites that damage wood framing within a building.

Insects, spiders, and bugs may be drawn to the building but are not meant to be inside the facility. So, the challenge is to keep them outside the building, as well as away from the building. If the facility has a lawn, then bugs, such as grubs, can destroy the lawn so there too, pest control needs to be applied to the lawn on a scheduled basis. The same can be said for shrubs and trees landscaping the building site. Bugs can attack bushes, flowers, and trees, as well as wasps and bees building their nests in trees and bushes.

Some consider spiders to be good to have around, if only a couple because they eat other insects and bugs. But, first impressions, when seeing insects, spiders, and bugs is not a healthy sign that the building is clean and safe for the occupants. When performing pest control preventive maintenance (PM), it is important to post warning signs that pest control substance has been applied. This lets people know there is a proactive initiative being applied to protect occupants, as well as people walking their dogs on the grass near the facility where certain chemicals can be abrasive to the pet's paws.

Rodents can be a more serious problems because they can bring disease, e.g., salmonella as well as cause serious damage to the property and can bite a person or their pet. While wasps and certain types of bees don't carry disease, they can be vicious and aggressive, and, for certain people, a wasp or bee bite can be deadly.

A person or persons involved with facility management should have on their list of PM plans, a pest control PM

work order system to confront insects, spiders, bugs, rodents, wasps, and bees. To do this, first identify and categorize these pests so that each can have its own PM work order assignment. For more on creating a PM work order refer to our *Focus on Facilities* August, 2019 "What a Preventive Maintenance Work Order Includes?" column for more information to get started with your PM plan.

Easiest way to create a pest control PM plan is to hire pest control contractors trained to exterminate the pest. But one should first, do their own research to learn about the good bugs and the bad pests. "Knowledge is power" and when it comes to pest control, this knowledge will help decide on whether to implement an in-house PM program or contract the work out to trained professionals. It is possible that pest control such as preventing wasp or bee nests attached to building and equipment, e.g., rooftop air-conditioner nests can be addressed by in-house personnel. Facility staff will often tell you that they always bring a can of wasp and bee spray with them when they go up to the

roof to complete a PM Work order because these bugs like to make their nest on the rooftop equipment.

When researching pest control there are several useful web sites to read about pest control: what is it, how is it handled, management, etc. Here are a few examples of these useful web sites:

https://www.allpestcontrolcompany.com/blog/why-is-pest-control-necessary/

https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/dos-and-donts-pest-control

https://www.mass.gov/doc/ipm-integrated-pest-management-kit-for-building-managers/download

https://facilityexecutive.com/2017/03/pest-management-building-envelope/

Once empowered with knowledge and understanding of pest control, and even before researching possible pest control contractors to interview, there are steps that should be taken to avoid pests and rodents from wanting to take up residence in the building. Some may be considered common sense but often overlooked is storing food away from walls and off of floors. This, along with securing the food in containers, not leaving food out to entice pests from being drawn to this food. Dispose of garbage in secure containers. Seal off possible ways pests can make their way into a facility or into a secured storage room.

A good way to be proactive and possibly avoid needing to hire a pest control professional is to take the knowledge learned and create a "walk-around" pest control checklist and routinely use this list to monitor and avoid the need for expensive, reactive pest control measures. For more information on creating a pest control checklist, refer to our *Focus on Facilities* October, 2020 "A Facility Management Checklist".

When the situation calls for additional expertise and a more proactive pest control PM plan, then it will be time to call in a couple of pest control contractors to interview for help. Having done one's homework in advance, the interview should include an agenda such as:

- Years of experience
- Number of trained technicians
- Types of certifications
- Methods of prevention and frequency of application
- Types of substances/chemicals used
- Types of mechanical devices used
- Signage used
- Fee: fixed per application or hourly per application
- Guarantee

Pest control preventive maintenance is essential within a building and outside the building to ensure occupant health and safety, as well as building and ground health and safety. To do so, start with a walk-around checklist and refer to *Focus on Facilities* November 2020 Facility Management column, "Embracing Checklists for Your Job Responsibilities".

Howard McKew is a registered engineer and president of Building Smart Software. Howie has a ton of experience to draw from the various industry jobs he's held and often writes about that experience in his columns in Engineered Systems Magazine. He is the author of 3-books, contributor to other author's books, lectures, and is an active member and Fellow in ASHRAE.

www.buildingsmartsoftware.com

hmckew@bss-consultant.com

The links to third-party websites included in this article are meant for convenience only. The Diocese of Cleveland Facilities Services Corporation does not review or control these third-party websites and is not responsible for any third-party websites or any content of those sites. Inclusion of any linked website does not imply our approval or endorsement of the products, services, or opinions of the third-party website. Linking to any other site is at your own sole risk and the Diocese of Cleveland Facilities Services Corporation will not be responsible or liable for any damages associated with linking to the third-party websites or any subsequent links.

For more information:
facilities@dioceseofcleveland.org

Facilities Services Corporation
Catholic Diocese of Cleveland