



Choosing a Pest Management Service

Termites, carpenter ants, cockroaches, mice and other pests have made themselves unwelcome guests in many homes and buildings around Rockland County. When these pests begin appearing, a homeowner may feel overwhelmed, wondering how to save the structure from collapsing. Most pests work slowly, however, and the chances of a building falling down in the additional two or three weeks it may take to research your options are indeed slim. It is wise to take steps in a timely manner to resolve the problem, even if the insects seem to disappear. Here are a few suggestions that may ease your worry and, if need be, help you choose a professional pest management service.

1. Have the pests correctly identified by Cornell Cooperative Extension or a pest management service.
2. All termite infestations in buildings require the services of a licensed exterminator or “pest management operator” in New York State. All chemicals that are used for termite management are restricted for use only by professional pesticide applicators. (Ask for our fact sheets on Termites and Inspecting for Termites.)
3. When selecting a pesticide applicator, follow the procedures outlined below:
 - a. Take time to get the facts. Where is the pest infestation? Is it active? Avoid a pest management operator who wants to do business on the basis of “I think you have termites” or “I think you have...” A reliable firm knows, it doesn’t guess; it can show you evidence of the problem, plus outline a detailed plan of action.
 - b. Make sure the firm:
 - * employs a certified pesticide applicator; ask to see a certification card issued by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.
 - * is licensed by the state
 - * is insured
 - c. Check for complaints against the firm with one or more of the following consumer agencies:

Rockland County Department of Consumer Protection at <http://www.co.rockland.ny.us/> or 845-708-7600
Better Business Bureau, Mid-Hudson Region, at <http://www.newyork.bbb.org/> or 212-533-6200
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Pesticide Bureau at 845-256-3097.

- d. Avoid firms that solicit business door to door and offer special rates if the job can be done at once, or firms that in some way imply you can get preferential treatment. Also avoid businesses that claim to be endorsed by the government or a university; neither the government nor universities give such endorsements.
- e. Get an estimate of the cost of treatment from at least two, and preferably, three different companies.
- f. If a warranty contract is offered, be sure:
 - * that the conditions of the warranty are specified in writing
 - * that the period of the warranty is specified
 - * that the warranty states exactly what is warranted, who shall decide whether the warranty is to be invoked, and specifies exactly what work will be done toward fulfillment of the contract.

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The information on pest management for New York State contained in this publication is dated August 2011. The user is responsible for obtaining the most up-to-date pest management information. Contact any Cornell Cooperative Extension county office or PMEP (<http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/>), the Cornell Cooperative Extension pesticide information website. The information herein is no substitute for pesticide labeling. The user is solely responsible for reading and following manufacturer's labeling and instructions.