Do You Need to Hire a Pest Control Company?

Soni Cochran
Extension Associate

There’s a lot going on in the wildlife world as we move into late summer and early fall. You may be considering the services of a pest control company to help you manage any pests. How do you know if you need to hire someone or can you manage pests on your own?

First, are you having trouble with pests in and around your home?

If the answer is NO, then you don’t currently need a pest control company.

If you are having pest problems, take the first step by identifying the pest you are having trouble with. This will let you know if you can solve the problem yourself or if you need to contact a pest control company.

Nebraska Extension promotes an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach which involves:

1. Cultural manipulation.
2. Monitoring and assessing pest numbers and damage.
3. Guidelines for when management is needed.
4. Preventing pest problems.
5. Using a combination of management tools: biological, cultural, physical/mechanical and finally, chemical.

Pest identification is a critical first step because you’ll learn what your problem pest needs to survive — what they eat, where they live and their life stages.

Capture the problem pests and bring them to your local county Extension office. Of course, alive is always best, but if you can’t capture the pest alive, make sure the sample is in good condition. Pests squished between tissues are nearly impossible for us to identify when all that is left is a bit of dried goo and part of a hairy leg.

You can also take a digital photo of your pest, but this can be tricky, since some features to help identify an insect or spider need to be seen under a microscope. We still might ask you to bring one in, but you can try emailing us a high-resolution photo.

Once your pest is identified and you learn more about the pest, you’ll be able to make the best decision for control.

A solution may be as simple as sweeping up the pest with a broom or using a flyswatter (watch cockroaches are accidental invaders in our area — no pesticides needed).

If it is one of the many pantry pests, you would search for an infested stored food products and learning how to best store dry goods in your pantry to prevent pests.

Sealing and caulkling around openings like windows and doors, keeping the home in good repair by repairing leaks and rotted wood is also key to reducing pests in the home.

Depending on the pest, you may need to hire a pest control company. For example, German cockroaches can quickly get out of control. For people dealing with bed bugs or fox bugs, you will want to hire a pest control company. If you have bats in your attic or raccoons tussling atop your attic, consider a pest control company to help you.

If you have termites in your home, a treatment will need to be done by a certified pest control company. Do not attempt to control termites on your own. Pest control companies will also perform an annual inspection for termites if you are concerned about them on your property.

If you decide you need to use the services of a pest control company, ask if the company practices Integrated Pest Management. IPM is the best and safest way to control pests found in and around your home.

Reliable pest control companies work hard and do the best they can to earn your business.