

How to Help Control Pests in Your Food Facility

Expert Insights



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Contents

3 From the Editor

Pest Control: How To Be Prepared for Your Next Food Safety Audit
(click here to learn more)

Audits can be unannounced, so staying ready will help prevent any unpleasant surprises.

How to Monitor and Track Pests in Your Facility (click here to learn more)

An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan takes a proactive approach to pest control by implementing preventive measures, rather than reactive actions, to help keep pests away.

4 Audit Preparation Guide

You work hard to maintain a quality facility, but an audit can leave you stressed and scrambling at the last minute to get everything up to code. You deserve to face your next inspection with confidence.

14 5 Questions to Ask Before Your Next Facility Audit

Staying audit-ready year-round helps you remain confident and at-ease, whether your next third-party inspection is tomorrow or a year from now.

16 How Your Pest Control Changes with the Seasons

Pests have peak seasons for sheltering, swarming, breeding, prepping, and invading, as well as a high season for infestation.

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From the Editor

Dear Readers,

A third-party food safety audit isn't always an event met with enthusiasm, even for a seasoned facility manager. While audits are critical in the food industry to ensure that all operators are practicing food safety measures, they can often be stressful visits to prepare for.

Because food processing facilities provide plenty of resources needed for survival—such as shelter, water, ideal temperatures, and food—they will always be prone to pests. And, because pest management accounts for a substantial portion of your total audit score, it's important to be ready for anything your auditor will be looking for. Managing a food facility is already a demanding job, and you don't want to fail an audit due to avoidable pest issues.

This ebook presents an overview of how to keep your food facility audit-ready as relates to pest control. In this special collection, we bring together informative articles from Orkin® Pest Control and *Food Quality & Safety* that detail steps you'll need to employ year-round to keep your products safe. You'll learn how to monitor and track pests in your facility, tips on preparing for your next audit—including how to employ an Integrated Pest Management plan into your operations—how to be audit ready at any time, and how pests are seasonal and what to expect at any time of year.

We think this series of important articles will serve as a useful resource for your food facility when it comes to pest management and, ultimately, help you to be proactive about pest control and uphold food safety regulations that will protect your business.

We hope you enjoy the read!

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AUDIT PREPARATION GUIDE

**Best Practices To Help
Keep Your Business Audit-Ready**



AUDIT 101

No matter how hard you work to keep a clean and sanitized workplace, the word “audit” can still strike fear in your heart—but it doesn’t have to. The days of scrambling at the last minute to get your business up to code can be over. The experts at Orkin have developed this guide for audit preparation best practices across industries so you can feel absolute confidence in keeping your facility ready for your audit year-round.

An audit is a documented inspection that ensures a facility is operating according to health and safety regulations for both employees and customers. This inspection often happens annually, but it may occur more frequently if there are issues, concerns or complaints that need a response. While an audit may be internal, it is often conducted by a third party, someone who is outside of the customer-supplier relationship and can be impartial. Be sure your pest control provider knows who your third-party auditor is so they can be familiar with their standards and requirements. Certain requirements may vary from industry to industry.



The experts at Orkin have developed this guide for audit preparation best practices across industries so you can feel absolute confidence in keeping your facility ready for your audit year-round.

FIVE STEPS FOR STAYING AUDIT-READY

Think of your audit prep as putting together a roadmap of everything you're doing for your facility when it comes to pest control. For your third-party auditor, you'll want to give both a bird's-eye view of your facility's plan as well as the details you're observing daily.

Rather than stressing out the week before an inspection, you can keep your roadmap up to date by following these five steps as part of your normal work routine:

- 1 Implement** a well-monitored Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program.
- 2 Document** by taking meticulous notes.
- 3 Gather** documents needed such as certifications, licenses and insurance.
- 4 Analyze** pest activity trends in your facility (it's easier than it sounds).
- 5 Assess** your facility annually to determine if any aspects of your pest control program should change.

Following these five steps will help you say goodbye to the last-minute preparation scramble and give you confidence in your readiness for an audit year-round.

1

IMPLEMENT A WELL-MONITORED IPM PROGRAM



The backbone for preparedness in any facility is a well-monitored Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. IPM is an ongoing, preventive approach to pest control that focuses on keeping pests out of your facility before a problem begins. Both sanitation and facility maintenance are a core part of an IPM program. To determine if your IPM program is up to date and being actively monitored, an auditor will need to confirm the following from your pest management company:

- ◆ **Has your pest control provider performed a risk analysis for your facility?** A risk analysis is crucial to create a baseline of information. What pests might infiltrate this facility and how? What are the risks involved to workers, consumers or the facility itself? Risk analysis and assessment have taken on more importance across all industries—how can you stop a problem before it begins?
- ◆ **What exclusion methods are needed and who is going to implement them?** Exclusion tactics are preventive maintenance measures taken (such as adding door sweeps) that help keep pests out before they ever become an issue.
- ◆ **What other recommendations does the pest control provider have for the facility?** What tactics, treatment schedules or other services (like bird removal) does the pest control provider recommend?
- ◆ **Has your IPM plan been updated or reassessed to make sure it still accomplishes your goals?**



2

DOCUMENT BY TAKING METICULOUS NOTES



A successful audit depends on proper historical documentation, so don't skimp on taking notes and making sure the information is easily accessible for your third-party auditor. Keeping information up to date throughout the year is your best bet for maintaining a regulated workplace and getting a high score on your audit. Here's what you should include:

Outline what is going on in and around your facility:

- ◆ What is the pest control provider's schedule for service and inspection?
- ◆ Are pests already present? What kind? Are there certain pests the facility is at risk of seeing?
- ◆ What non-chemical steps are in place to prevent these pests?
- ◆ Are pest control devices such as bait traps being used? If so, make sure they are identified correctly on the floor plan and labeled with service information.

Take note of treatment application data.

- ◆ Remember that each industry has safety regulations regarding the use of chemicals. For each use of a treatment, you need to document:
 - Who applied the treatment.
 - When the treatment was applied.
 - Where the treatment was applied.
- ◆ Product labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for each treatment used must also accompany proper documentation.

Document all recommendations and corrective actions.

- ◆ Are there any sanitation issues your facility will tackle? If so, what are the next steps for treatment?
- ◆ How has your facility handled the recommendations from the pest control provider?
- ◆ How will your facility continue to handle those recommendations from the pest control provider?
- ◆ Document your successful handling of all issues pointed out by previous audits and your service providers.

3

GATHER DOCUMENTS

In addition to the documentation that you keep about the ongoing pest control in your facility, you will want to ensure that specific documents are readily available for an auditor.



Make sure the credentials and training of your pest control provider are accessible at your facility.

An auditor wants to know that the company and people you've hired for the job are well-qualified, and the way to prove that is to provide the following documents:

- ◆ A photocopy of the valid registration or license for each member of the team that provides pest control service to your property.
- ◆ Proof that every pest specialist on the team has successfully completed Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) trainings.
- ◆ Written documentation that each person on the pest management team is qualified to handle the materials necessary, including special treatments.
- ◆ Many audits require at least one annual training session so the pest management team can learn new material or have a refresher course if nothing has changed.

Keep your observation logs and other documentation on hand, including:

- ◆ Pest-sighting log
- ◆ Usage log of any chemicals or special treatments
- ◆ Facility floor plan showing identification and correct placement of pest control devices
- ◆ Service reports from your pest control provider



4

ANALYZE PEST ACTIVITY TRENDS

Conduct a pest trend analysis of your facility—both the interior and exterior—by gathering information over time and recording the data. Here are the steps to incorporating an ongoing pest trend analysis at your facility:

Start a pest-sighting log. Since a facility has a lot of ground to cover, engage your staff to keep an eye out for pest sightings. Make sure the log is up to date and easy for others to access and add to it. For each entry, include:

- ◆ Name(s) of person reporting
- ◆ Date and time
- ◆ Location
- ◆ Type of pests or evidence of pests observed
- ◆ Actions taken
- ◆ Photos (if possible)

Keep a count of all pest captures through monitoring devices. Over time, is pest activity increasing or decreasing? Are there seasonal or operational trends?

Look out for pest indicators. These signs include chew marks, droppings, damage to packaging and both spiders and their webs. (Note: to learn about your pests, observe where a spider spins its web and what gets caught in it.)

Conduct a quarterly review of your analysis. Speak to your trusted pest control provider to determine if your IPM program should shift based on these observations.

Document your findings for the pest trend analysis and your quarterly review.



5

ASSESS YOUR FACILITY ANNUALLY

Once a year, assess how your current plan and methods are working at your property. This is the time to determine if any changes need to be made. Ask yourself the following three questions and document your answers to have on hand for your auditor:



How well is my IPM program being maintained at my facility?:

- ◆ Are there sanitation issues?
- ◆ Is there a pest trend that is out of control or that has been mitigated?



What should the upcoming year look like?

- ◆ Should the IPM program be adjusted in any way?
- ◆ Don't forget to document any changes made to your IPM program.

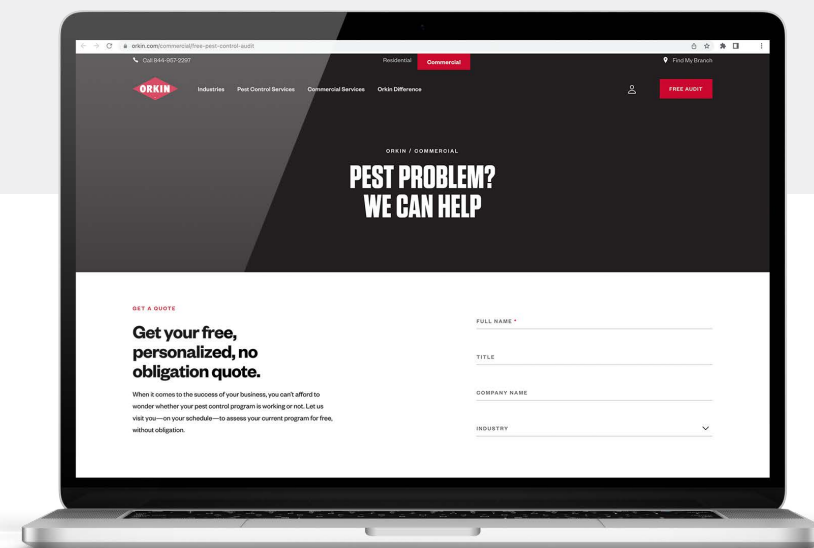


How is documentation going?

- ◆ Are you successfully keeping track of pest activity and any changes in your facility? Is it easy to add data?
- ◆ Are you on a good documentation schedule?
- ◆ Should anything shift to make documentation go more smoothly?

Don't let your next audit sneak up on you.

Contact Orkin today to [schedule a free inspection](#) and get started on your no-stress audit prep.



BONUS

Turn the page for a sample checklist to help keep your business audit-ready year-round.

Pest control can affect safety in your workplace—and even your final product or customer wellbeing—so it's a serious matter. It can also be a significant factor in your audit's outcome. By spending time on the five steps outlined in this guide—implementing, documenting, gathering, analyzing and assessing—you can improve the safety and cleanliness of your facility, and also approach your next audit with confidence, whether it's tomorrow or a year from now.

Taking control of your audit preparation day by day can ultimately help save you all of the stress, hassle and points lost by not being properly prepared throughout the year.

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CHECKLIST TO BE AUDIT-READY YEAR-ROUND

Consult with your trusted pest control provider to review audit requirements for your business.

DATE COMPLETED: _____

Review on-site documentation with your pest control provider. Make sure the following are available, complete and up to date:

- Certifications, licenses and insurance
- Pest-sighting logs and trend analysis data
- Service reports
- Corrective action reports (including pest activity, sanitation, housekeeping and business maintenance issues)
- Usage log of chemicals
- Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and labels for all chemicals and other special treatments used on-site
- Floor plan includes location for all pest control devices
- Quarterly pest control program evaluations
- Annual facility assessment
- Original scope of service

DATE COMPLETED: _____

Walk the interior and exterior of the facility with your trusted pest control provider to check the following:

- All pest control devices are marked correctly on the floor plan.
- All pest control devices conform to auditor's requirements.
- All exterior bait stations are tamper-resistant, locked and secured to the ground.
- All exterior devices are serviced by minimum standards or based on risk assessment.
- All interior devices are serviced by minimum standards or based on risk assessment.
- All devices are labeled with service information.
- Fly lights are properly positioned (if used).
- Rodent burrows are eliminated from the property.
- Exclusion tactics are in place as outlined by your Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program.

DATE COMPLETED: _____

Review your IPM program with your pest control provider annually and make sure your facility is staying up to date on an ongoing basis.

DATE COMPLETED: _____





Pest Management Documentation

Be prepared for your next food safety audit | BY FRANK MEEK

Food processing facility managers know the importance of product quality and run a tight ship to meet regulatory requirements, while delivering goods on time and without issues. Third-party food safety audits help ensure that operators are practicing food safety measures, and proper preparation for these visits, whether they occur in person or are held remotely, is essential to your success.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has required changes to the way audits are conducted in food processing facilities, third-party audits remain a priority to ensure that food safety standards are upheld. Unfortunately, understaffing and limitations to interior pest control service may have provided the perfect conditions for pests to enter and multiply in facilities, unnoticed. Whether your facility has continued to participate in audits as usual, has adjusted to a hybrid version, or has paused in-person audits during the pandemic, remaining prepared is crucial. Operating a food processing facility is a demanding job already, and the last thing you want to do is fail an audit due to preventable pest issues.

A poor audit score—or worse, a failed audit—could have damaging effects on your business, ranging from tarnished reputations to canceled orders and lost profits. With the pest control portion of your audit accounting for up to 20% of your final score, it's important to have a reliable pest control provider who understands your business and your industry's requirements for food safety and pest control. Additionally, your provider needs to be aware of the various audit schemes that in are use and what their specific, individual requirements are.

Your Pest Management Program

Because food processing facilities provide ample resources needed for survival—shelter, water, ideal temperatures and food—they will always be prone to pests. Although operators in these facilities have strict sanitation and safety measures in place, pests such as cockroaches, rodents, and stored product pests can still disrupt operations.

An integrated pest management (IPM) program, which focuses on preventive techniques rather than reactive treatment for pests, is one of the best ways to make sure your facility is prepared. Partnering

with your pest control provider to assess your facility's pest pressures and maintaining a proper sanitation and cleaning schedule are key steps to a successful IPM program.

Maintaining proper documentation is also necessary to ensure IPM success, as well as an essential part of the pest control portion of your food safety audit. Keeping documentation updated is important because, even with a pest-free facility, you could still lose points on an audit due to insufficient or poor documentation.

Your auditor doesn't just want to see pest monitoring devices and a pest-free facility. They want to see an ongoing commitment to upholding food safety measures. The following documents can help demonstrate that commitment.

- **IPM plan:** This documentation includes your written IPM program, pest management food safety rules and your risk assessment. Make sure these documents are kept updated (at least annually) and address any recent changes to your IPM program or facility.
- **Pest sighting log:** Facility managers and staff should have this available and updated at all times. Entries should include the date of the sighting, type of pest, location, and the actions taken to prevent future occurrences.
- **Service documentation:** These are reports of your pest control provider's visits and will provide the auditor with

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more details about any pest findings, pest pressures specific to the facility, and whether any corrective measures taken by your facility were successful.

- **Pesticide documentation:** While the use of pesticides in food processing facilities is often limited, your pest control provider should keep a record of any pesticides used, along with labels for the products and safety data sheets. These will show your auditor that you're maintaining a safe and environmentally friendly facility.

Be Prepared

Now that you know what information is needed for your food safety audit, be sure you stay prepared. Audits can be unannounced, so staying ready will help prevent any unpleasant surprises. The goal is to be ready every day for an audit.

To make sure you're prepared for an audit:

- Communicate with your pest control provider on an ongoing basis throughout your partnership. While they are

the expert when it comes to pests, you know your facility better than anyone. Taking a proactive role in the partnership will help prevent pest issues in the long run.

- Involve your entire staff in the IPM plan; they know the most about your facility and may spot pests or other issues before you do.
- Conduct annual assessments, regular inspections, and risk assessments with your pest control provider to ensure your IPM plan remains effective and proper.
- Make sure you're aware of any changes to your pest control service, and be sure to document them. The pandemic altered the way many facilities were able to work with their pest control providers, so document any changes prior to your audit.
- Don't wait until the last minute to get your documentation in order, because it takes time to compile the information. Your pest control provider should have hard copies of all the essential

reports and paperwork, but keeping them digitally is also a good idea. Most pest control providers have digital systems for documentation that even provide trend reports and analysis your auditor will appreciate. It's also easier to share documentation digitally when there are so many required items.

- Your pest control provider should have proof of their training available for your records as well.

In this time of heightened public health concern, food safety audits shouldn't be ignored in an effort to keep the supply chain moving at all costs. Even if your audit is conducted virtually, your documentation still will be required. Working with the right pest control provider for your business and being a proactive partner will help ensure that your next food safety audit is a success. ■

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Manufacturing & Distribution



Pest Traceability and Your Business

How to monitor and track pests in your facility | BY GLEN RAMSEY

It's no surprise that one small pest issue in a food processing facility can quickly become a major issue for an entire supply chain. Not only can pests threaten your bottom line and employee well-being, but they can also tarnish your reputation and delay operations. All of this can become costly, which

is why it's important to follow industry regulations and prioritize food safety.

Pests can hitchhike across borders in transportation vehicles and travel in and out of your facility unnoticed via packaging. These critters need food, water, and shelter to survive and, unfortunately, food processing facilities provide ample

amounts of these attractants. Unlike some other industries, food processing plants have continued to operate during the coronavirus pandemic, making them a prime target for pests.

And while you may be taking all the right steps to ensure that a safe, quality product reaches consumers, you can't al-

ways guarantee that your suppliers' pest management programs are as effective as yours.

An integrated pest management (IPM) plan takes a proactive approach to pest control by implementing preventive measures, rather than reactive actions, to help keep pests away. Infestations can be costly and wreak havoc on your facility operations, bottom line, and reputation. Being proactive about pest management will help ensure that all food products leaving your facility make it to their next stop in the best condition.

Traceability is a key part of an effective IPM program; it can help keep pests out of your facility and, should they enter, help ensure they are taken care of promptly. As food supply chains become more connected, traceability and monitoring become more important.

Common Pests

To trace and monitor pests, you need to know what you're up against. Here are some of the most common pests:

- **Rodents.** One of the filthiest pests that can crawl through your facility is a rodent. Mice and rats can squeeze through small spaces and gnaw through tough materials. In addition to causing structural damage, rodents can contaminate your food products and spread diseases via their urine and droppings, making it essential to always maintain a sanitary facility.
- **Cockroaches.** Cockroaches carry more than 45 pathogens on their bodies, including *E. coli* and *Salmonella*, and can spread these across your facility by simply crawling around in search of food. Because they feed on almost anything, they can easily escape notice as they contaminate your food supply. They can also cause discomfort for your employees and trigger allergy issues.
- **Ants.** These critters are so tiny that they can migrate in and out of your facility almost completely undetected. Don't be fooled by their size though; ants leave an invisible pheromone trail to notify other ants once they've found a food source.

Be sure to discuss hot spots so your employees know where to focus their efforts. From triple checking deliveries and

shipments at the loading dock to disinfecting production floor equipment after each shift, little actions will go a long way in helping to prevent an introduction.

Tracking and Traceability Plans

Documentation is an important part of a food processing facility's audit preparation and, if you have a reliable pest management partner, it's likely that they have

Traceability is a key part of an effective IPM program; it can help keep pests out of your facility and, should they enter, help ensure they are taken care of promptly.

extensive pest tracking and trending information. This information can help you and your pest management partner find the source of pest issues.

Let's discuss the documents you should have on hand.

Food safety plan. Your food safety plan is the most important part of your documentation. Included in your pest management section should be details about all proactive measures taken to ensure that your food products are safe from pests. All corrective actions, potential hazards, and other steps to reduce risk should also be included in this document. If you use monitoring and verification procedures and have information on your suppliers' pest programs, you should include that as well. This shows you are monitoring incoming and outgoing shipments for pest activity and taking actions where necessary to prevent pests from infiltrating the supply chain.

Monitoring devices and traps. These are often used for tracking pests and minimizing their populations. Your pest control provider should have data for each device that details their location and pest activity levels. Some pest control providers even gather this information remotely and store it digitally for easy data visualization and record management. Make sure you work with your pest control provider to obtain the trend reports from these devices so you

can use the insights to revise your current pest management plan, as needed, and prove to your auditors that you're being proactive in your pest control efforts.

Annual assessments. Review your IPM plan with your provider annually, at a minimum. Make a note of pest problems that occurred and discuss resolutions for them accordingly. By performing these annual assessments, you'll be able to spot recurring problems quickly and develop more targeted solutions.

Sighting reports. Your facility should have a logbook for recording pest sightings and, if your staff doesn't already have access to it, they should. These will help your pest control provider perform thorough investigations of pest activity and make more accurate recommendations.

List of service changes. Your IPM program should change as your pest pressures do. No two food processing facilities are the same, and a variety of external factors can cause pest pressures to shift periodically. Whenever you make a change to your pest management program, be sure to note how you changed your program and why you implemented those changes.

Tracing and monitoring pests requires a team effort. In addition to staff training from your pest control provider, communicating with your supplier and distributors is important. It might seem as if it will damage your reputation to share news about documented pest issues with your supply chain, but it's quite the opposite. Keeping your suppliers and distributors informed of pest issues within your facility can help protect the rest of the supply chain from pests.

Pests will go to any lengths to get food, water, and shelter—especially during a pandemic. If you aren't already implementing traceable policies in your facility, now is the best time to start. In addition to a strong IPM program, finding and removing pests will be easier for you and your pest control provider with these traceability policies.

While pest pressures won't stop immediately, these tactics will help uphold food safety regulations and protect your business in the long run. ■

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