

Why are cockroaches a pest?

Cockroaches are an ancient insect species that have always lived amongst humans. They are considered a public health hazard as they feed on virtually anything (omnivorous). This feeding behaviour can result in cockroaches feeding in drains and waste storage areas. Diseases can then be picked up and transferred onto food products and surfaces.

Infestations are often the result of broken drains or building defects. Cockroaches can even be transferred between locations, for example by eggs or adults being within products purchased from infested shops.

They carry bacteria which can be responsible for gastroenteritis, dysentery and typhoid. They can also pick up and transmit pathogens. In extreme cases cockroaches can also cause allergic reactions for some people, including asthmatics.

There are two species that are commonly found in domestic environments, the German Cockroach and the Oriental Cockroach. Each are as common but will live and breed in slightly different ways / environments.

Signs of cockroaches

All cockroaches are nocturnal and will hide during the daytime. However, if an infestation is large enough you may be able to see the insects at anytime during the day.

If you suspect you have an infestation, watch for insects scuttling away to hide when you enter at night. Also you can use a torch to check behind units, refrigerators and cookers to look for cockroaches. Also look for faecal matter and redundant egg cases.



German Cockroaches

- * German cockroaches are dark brown to black and have two dark brown stripes. They are approximately 1.7cm long with a tapering abdomen
- * Each female will produce 4 to 8 egg capsules in her lifetime and each capsule will contain 30 to 40 eggs
- * Infestations will be found in areas of high humidity and near food e.g. in kitchens behind fridges, skirting boards, around cookers and in cupboards
- * Untidy and unclean living conditions will attract cockroaches
- * In large infestations there can be a sweet smell



1.7cm

Oriental Cockroaches

- * Oriental cockroaches are a very dark brown or shiny black and are approximately 2.5cm long
- * Each female will produce an average of 8 egg capsules and each will contain 16 eggs
- * Oriental cockroaches prefer spaces where they can crawl around like basements, cellars, drains and other moist areas
- * They can tolerate lower temperatures than German cockroaches so they can be found in drains, bins and waste areas

2.5cm



How to prevent an infestation

Good housekeeping and hygiene should help prevent or control a cockroach infestation.

However the following suggestions may also help:

- * Keep all open food stuffs in tightly sealed containers
- * Keep surfaces, food preparation areas and floors as clean as possible
- * Clean kitchen areas intensively, focusing on areas where grease accumulates
- * Clear up after every meal and do not leave food lying around, especially overnight
- * Remove rubbish regularly from inside. Rubbish should be stored in sealed bins (i.e. wheelie bins) and kept away from the building
- * Ensure any indoor drain access is sealed. The edges of lids should be greased to ensure they are completely sealed



Control Measures

How to treat an infestation

The treatment of cockroaches is challenging as it is necessary to use insecticides to treat an infestation. This is why we recommend that treatment is done professionally. However this should be backed up by maintaining good housekeeping and hygiene.

Due to their biology cockroaches are very quick to spread and where there is a large infestation it is possible that neighbours and surrounding properties may also have a problem. Suspected infestations must be dealt with quickly.

Private contractors

We recommend that you seek an experienced expert in cockroach control. They should be a member of the British Pest Control Association. You can contact them by calling 01332 294 288 or by visiting www.bpca.org.uk.

You should expect, even with a minor infestation, a time intensive treatment with a minimum of three visits. During these visits the contractor will lay insect monitors in the property and use insecticidal gels and sprays to eradicate the infestation.



Where infestations are severe a successful treatment could take in excess of a month.

When seeking the services of a private contractor you should always obtain a minimum of three quotes. This will allow you to compare service and price.

Always check that the price given is to eradicate (i.e. a fixed charge). Otherwise they may charge you per visit which could spiral out of control.

Leeds City Council Service

The council offers competitive rates for the treatment and control of cockroaches in both domestic and commercial properties.

For further information or to book a treatment by a qualified and experienced pest control officer please call **0113 2224406**.

Commercial premises can arrange for a free survey and quotation.



Cockroaches

Pest information leaflet



Contact us

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet or would like professional advice please contact
Leeds City Council Corporate Call Centre
0113 2224406
or email
pests@leeds.gov.uk

Further information and copies of this leaflet can be found on the council's website
www.leeds.gov.uk/pestcontrol

Alternatively you can get further advice from the National Pest Technician's Association or the British Pest Control Association