

Code of Best Practice – Precautionary Insecticidal Treatments

A BPCA Code of Best Practice is a set of written rules which explains how people working in our industry should behave in a particular situation. It encompasses relevant legislation, but is not law in itself. However, were a member to act outside of the norms outlined in the COBP, they may be subject to disciplinary action and/or be in breach of legislation. Members must abide by Codes of Best Practice in their day-to-day work. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Association.

The BPCA is aware that BPCA members can be requested to treat biting insects in locations such as domestic properties and offices when there is no evidence of infestation. In circumstances where insects are not present, treatment can be viewed as a potential misuse of the insecticide - this may result in a breach of legislation.

This Code of Best Practice is designed to remind members of their responsibilities, and act as supporting document for members who feel pressured by customers to apply insecticides when they are not required.

Related Legislation

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Control of Pesticide Regulations 1986
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002
- EU Biocidal Product Regulation (528/2012)

KEY Principles

- **Is Treatment with an Insecticide Required?**
Legislation such as the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health instruct the operator to consider if the use of a hazardous substance is actually required – in pest control terms, can the pest be controlled by other means such as good hygiene practice, sealing of access points etc. If the answer is yes then insecticide may not be an appropriate treatment option.
- **Is there Evidence of Biting Insect Activity?**
The pest controller should be under no illusion that before an insecticide is applied, they must be confident that a pest species is present. The use of insecticide without just cause is illegal and can result in unnecessary contamination of property, foodstuffs and non-target species. If the evidence is not apparent after inspection then the pest control operator must use monitoring equipment to determine the nature, level and extent of infestation. As many insect pest species are cryptic and nocturnal, evidence of pests may not necessarily be the physical presence of the insect itself.

- **Use the Appropriate Insecticide**

It is the responsibility of the pest control operator to consult the label of their chosen insecticide to determine if it is appropriate for the pest and the location of the treatment. Always adhere to the label and use the insecticide with the manufacturers recommended applicator, such as a compression sprayer for and liquid insecticide or an applicator gun with a bait formulation.

- **Appropriate Assessment**

Before any application occurs, the pest control technician must be happy that the appropriate RISK, COSHH and Environmental assessments have been completed. If for any reason the technician does not agree with the assessment, or does not feel competent to carry out the relevant assessment, then guidance will be required from another company representative. Assessment should not just consider the application of the pesticide, but also the transportation and mixing of the product whilst on the customer's site.

- **Treatment Process**

Pest Control Operators should ensure that non target species and members of the public are excluded from the treatment area if a liquid insecticide is being applied. The exclusion should remain in place until the insecticide is completely dry. This will depend on the operator's assessment, but is usually between 2-4 hours. Personal Protective Equipment should be worn as per the product label or as per risk assessment. Application equipment should be suitable and sufficient, with maintenance records available to support this.

- **Treatment Records**

Reputable companies leave records of the treatments that have been carried out. It is essential that if you apply an insecticide, you detail on the report key pieces of information such as the treatment location, the active ingredient and trade name, quantities of pesticide used, and any exclusion recommendations. Competent contractors will also offer advice on when they will return if required, and on pest prevention measures to help control further infestation issues.