

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Clip -n- Save: Rout Out Pests With These 5 Insider Tips

Facilities can help prevent or eliminate pests by using these simple tactics, according to pest control expert **Pat Hottel**:

1. Seal any outside openings to the buildings (windows, utility lines, etc.). Also check your screens on a regular basis.
2. Reduce harborage or shelter where pests breed and live, including clutter, cracks and crevices. "Use caulking or other appropriate sealant to fill in cracks in walls and around pipe-wall junctures," Hottel advises. "Focus on areas with food and moisture nearby that will attract bugs."
3. Discourage staff from leaving doors open a crack while they step outside to smoke. It's horrifying but true: Flies have been known to lay eggs in residents' wounds, notes consultant **Beth Klitch** in Columbus, OH.
4. Don't use corrugated cardboard to store things. "The German cockroaches prefer wood surfaces and cardboard, and will breed in the corrugations," says Hottel. Instead, use plastic bins to store small food items, such as sugar packets, that can't be stored directly on shelves.
5. Discourage residents from storing food in their rooms. If they insist on keeping snacks in their rooms, ask them to seal the food in plastic containers, Hottel advises.

Tip: Antsy over ant sightings? If you see carpenter ants in your facility, check for water-damaged wood. "In some cases, these ants will set up a colony indoors nestling in water-damaged, softened wood," says Hottel. "But usually there's a 'parent nest' outdoors, so conduct an inspection outside as well." While fire ants are usually outdoor dwellers, Hottel has occasionally seen them set up nests in people's homes inside bath traps and other damp locations. "So if the facility has a problem with fire ants, check inside and outside," she advises.