

Cockroaches can infest homes, apartment buildings, grocery stores, restaurants, and any other place they can find food, water, warmth, and shelter. They can also cause health related issues as they carry and transmit germs over household surfaces, food, or surfaces. Cockroach feces and body parts have also been known to cause asthma and allergic reactions in some people.



Cockroaches look for both food and warmth, and are most commonly found in kitchen areas. They do not like wide-open areas and will spend most of their time in the tight cracks, crevices, and walls of building structures. These are called harborage locations. Within walls, cockroaches will travel along plumbing, electrical wiring, and gas lines to reach other areas of your home.

What can be done?

Treating a cockroach problem with pesticide sprays, powders, foggers, or bug bombs will kill some cockroaches but does little to reach where they live. Cockroaches not killed by chemicals leave the contaminated area and spread to new harborage locations. Additionally, the use of a pesticide will leave chemical residue in the home environment that can be harmful to some. For safe and effective use of these pesticides, contact a licensed pest control operator (PCO).

Safe treatment products include bait stations, baiting gels, egg stoppers, and sticky traps. Bait stations and gels are solid pesticides cockroaches eat or rub against. They will not die immediately, but rather take the pesticide back to the harborage area and spread the chemical to other cockroaches killing them as well. Egg stoppers are not actually a pesticide but a chemical that attacks cockroaches' growth processes and eliminates the possibility of their reproducing. Sticky traps are also effective and safe as they do not use pesticide chemicals but rely on a sticky substance to trap the insects.

Cockroach infestations should be under the treatment of a PCO and are rarely eliminated with just a single treatment. If management, tenants and the PCO work in cooperation, a cockroach infestation can be controlled and possibly eliminated over time. By removing food, water, and harborage locations, cockroaches are placed under stress. A stressed cockroach is more easily killed by pesticide baits. Lack of food will also encourage the cockroaches to eat the baits. Elimination of harborage locations will reduce places

where the cockroach can live and prevent further access into your home.

According to the Structural Pest Control Act, any pest control operator (PCO) contracted needs to be licensed by the State of Illinois. Only a licensed PCO can use professional pesticides. Use of pesticides purchased from a store must be used according to the directions. The Illinois Department of Public Health regulates the application of pesticides. Currently, the role of the DuPage County Health Department is to only advise and document. We do not have an ordinance to enforce cockroach control in housing situations. However, some of the municipalities in DuPage County will enforce control and we work with them on a consulting basis.

Summary Tips

Eliminate food & water sources

- Keep kitchen counters, cabinets, drawers and floors free of all food debris.
- Keep food packages closed, preferably sealed tightly in containers.
- Do not leave dirty dishes out. Remove food and water bowls for pets during the night.
- Empty garbage and recycle containers often.
- Repair any plumbing leaks.

Eliminate harborage areas

- Seal (caulk, foam, or spackle) openings in the wall especially around utility lines.
- Caulk cabinets together and to the wall and floor.
- Caulk the top and bottom of baseboards to the wall and floor.
- Remove clutter to reduce harborage areas.

Treatment

- Use bait stations, baiting gel, traps, and the egg stopper products according to the directions at all times.
- Minimize or eliminate the use of spray or fogging pesticides.
- Contact a PCO if needed.
- Protect your food from any chemical treatment.