PestGuardCo

2026 EDITION



THE HOMEOWNER'S FIELD GUIDE

Keep pests out, room by room

Where mice, roaches, ants, bed bugs, termites and wasps get in, what to check, and when to call a pest pro.

Kitchen | Pantry and food storage | Bedroom | Basement and crawl space | Attic | Outside walls and eaves

CALL A LOCAL PRO

(855) 424-9709

www.pestguardco.com

WELCOME

Keep this guide where you can find it fast

Problems at home rarely wait for a good moment. This guide helps you recognize what's going on, decide how fast to act and know what to do in the first few minutes.

1. **Start with the sign.** The "Start with the sign you found" page matches what you see to the likely problem.
2. **Check the urgency.** Every problem carries a color: ● Act now, ● Check monthly, ● Check each season.
3. **Do the first steps.** Each problem lists what to do right now, while you call.

⚠ **Safety first.** If anyone is hurt or in danger, call 911.

ONE CALL CONNECTS YOU WITH AN INDEPENDENT LOCAL COMPANY

(855) 424-9709

INSIDE

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AT A GLANCE

How urgent is it?

A quick way to sort the problem in front of you.

Act now

- Kitchen
- Bedroom

Check monthly

- Pantry and food storage
- Basement and crawl space
- Attic
- Doors, windows and openings

Check each season

- Outside walls and eaves
- Yard, patio and deck

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START HERE

Start with the sign you found

If you've already seen a sign, the room it's in tells you where to focus.

WHAT YOU NOTICE	MOST LIKELY	PAGE
Droppings in a kitchen drawer	**Kitchen**	6
Bugs in flour or cereal	**Pantry**	8
Spots on the sheets	**Bedroom**	10
Scratching overhead at night	**Attic**	14
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Bugs on the sills in fall	**Doors and openings**	20



01 ACT NOW

ROOM 1 OF 8

Kitchen

DRAWS	WHY
Mice, roaches, ants	**Food, water and warmth**

What to look for

Droppings in drawers, grease marks along baseboards, ant trails and roaches at night.

Prevent it next time

- Seal gaps around pipes under the sink.
- Wipe crumbs and grease every night.
- Take trash out daily.

Where pests get in

Gaps around pipes under the sink, behind the stove and dishwasher, and small holes in cabinets.

Signs to look for

- Droppings in drawers or under the sink
- Ant trails on counters
- Roaches when lights come on
- Chewed packaging

Do this now

1. Seal gaps around pipes under the sink.
2. Wipe crumbs and grease nightly.
3. Fix dripping taps and dry the sink.

What the pro will do

1. Inspects under sinks, appliances and cabinets.
2. Treats active areas and sets monitors.
3. Shows you the entry points to seal.

> Act now if you see droppings or roaches.

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02 CHECK MONTHLY

ROOM 2 OF 8

Pantry and food storage

DRAWS
Pantry moths, beetles, mice

FIX
Sealed containers

What to look for

Tiny bugs in flour or cereal, webbing in grains, holes in boxes and droppings on shelves.

Prevent it next time

- Store dry food in sealed containers.
- Check new bags before putting them away.
- Rotate older items to the front.

Prevention

Move dry food into glass or hard plastic containers and rotate older items to the front.

Signs to look for

- Bugs in flour, rice or cereal
- Small holes in boxes
- Webbing in grains
- Droppings on shelves

Do this now

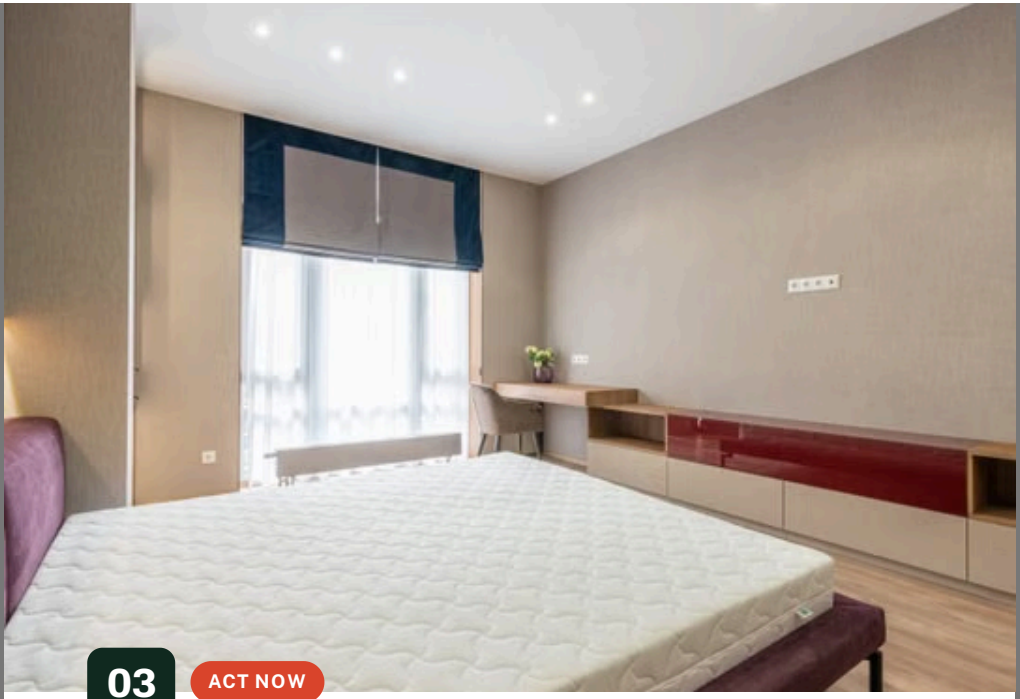
1. Toss infested food in sealed bags outside.
2. Vacuum and wipe shelves.
3. Store dry goods in sealed containers.

What the pro will do

1. Identifies the pantry pest.
2. Treats shelves and cracks.
3. Recommends storage changes.

> Check monthly.

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03 ACT NOW

ROOM 3 OF 8

Bedroom

DRAWS	RISK
Bed bugs, spiders	**Luggage after travel**

What to look for

Rust or black spots on sheets, bites in lines, and tiny bugs in mattress seams.

Prevent it next time

- Inspect luggage after every trip.
- Check secondhand furniture before it comes inside.
- Keep clutter off the floor.

Prevention

Inspect luggage after trips, keep suitcases off the bed and check secondhand furniture before bringing it in.

Signs to look for

- Spots on sheets
- Bites in a line
- Bugs in mattress seams
- Shed skins near the headboard

Do this now

1. Check mattress seams with a flashlight.
2. Wash bedding hot after travel.
3. Keep luggage on a hard floor or rack.

What the pro will do

1. Inspects mattress seams, frames and furniture.
2. Treats with heat or targeted methods.
3. Schedules a follow-up check.

> Act now if you find spots or bites.

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04 CHECK MONTHLY

ROOM 4 OF 8

Basement and crawl space

DRAWS	WHY
Termites, spiders, mice	**Damp, dark, quiet**

What to look for

Mud tubes on foundation walls, damp wood, droppings and lots of spiders.

Prevent it next time

- Run a dehumidifier.
- Keep wood and cardboard off the floor.
- Fix leaks quickly.

Prevention

Run a dehumidifier, fix leaks, and keep wood and cardboard off the floor and away from walls.

Signs to look for

- Mud tubes on walls
- Soft or hollow wood
- Droppings along walls
- Webs in corners

Do this now

1. Run a dehumidifier.
2. Store items in plastic bins off the floor.
3. Check sill plates for mud tubes.

What the pro will do

1. Inspects sill plates and foundation walls.
2. Treats for termites or other pests found.
3. Recommends moisture fixes.

> Check monthly; act now if you see mud tubes.

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05 CHECK MONTHLY

ROOM 5 OF 8

Attic

DRAWS
Mice, rats, wasps

BUSIEST
Fall and winter

What to look for

Scratching at night, droppings, chewed wires or insulation, and nests near vents.

Prevent it next time

- Screen all vents.
- Trim branches back from the roof.
- Store items in sealed bins.

Prevention

Screen vents, seal gaps where the roof meets the walls, and trim branches touching the roof.

Signs to look for

- Scratching at night
- Droppings on insulation
- Chewed wires
- Wasp nests near vents

Do this now

1. Listen at night to locate activity.
2. Don't touch nests or droppings without gloves.
3. Trim branches away from the roof.

What the pro will do

1. Finds entry points and activity.
2. Removes nests and sets traps or baits.
3. Seals gaps where pests get in.

> Check each fall, and act now if you hear scratching.

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06 CHECK EACH SEASON

ROOM 6 OF 8

Outside walls and eaves

DRAWS
Wasps, spiders, ants

CHECK
Eaves, siding gaps, utility lines

What to look for

Paper nests under eaves, ant trails up the foundation and gaps where pipes and wires enter.

Prevent it next time

- Seal gaps around pipes and wires.
- Keep mulch a few inches from the siding.
- Check eaves for nests in early spring.

Prevention

Seal utility openings, keep mulch a few inches back from siding and trim plants touching the house.

Signs to look for

- Nests under eaves
- Ant trails on the foundation
- Gaps around pipes and wires
- Plants touching siding

Do this now

1. Keep kids away from nests.
2. Pull mulch back from the foundation.
3. Note gaps for sealing.

What the pro will do

1. Treats the perimeter.
2. Removes nests safely.
3. Seals small openings.

> Check each season.

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07 CHECK EACH SEASON

ROOM 7 OF 8

Yard, patio and deck

DRAWS	KEY
Mosquitoes, ants, wasps	**Standing water, wood piles**

What to look for

Standing water, ant mounds, wasps around decks and wood piles against the house.

Prevent it next time

- Tip out standing water weekly.
- Store firewood away from the house.
- Keep grass trimmed near the foundation.

Prevention

Tip out water weekly, store firewood away from the house and keep decks clear of debris.

Signs to look for

- Standing water in planters or toys
- Ant mounds
- Wasps under deck rails
- Wood piled against the house

Do this now

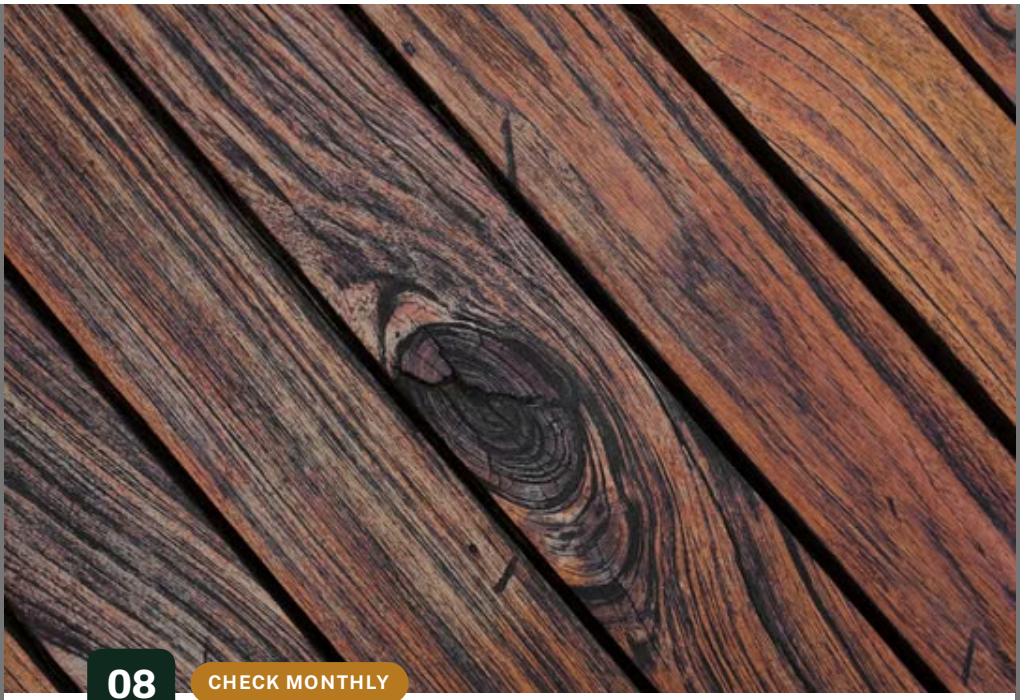
1. Tip out standing water.
2. Move firewood 20 feet from the house.
3. Clear leaf piles near the foundation.

What the pro will do

1. Treats breeding areas and shrubs.
2. Checks for ant mounds and nests.
3. Sets a seasonal treatment schedule.

> Check each season, weekly in summer for standing water.

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08 CHECK MONTHLY

ROOM 8 OF 8

Doors, windows and openings

A MOUSE FITS	BUSIEST
Through a dime-sized gap	**Fall**

What to look for

Light under doors, torn screens and gaps around frames where bugs collect on the sills.

Prevent it next time

- Add sweeps to exterior doors.
- Repair torn screens.
- Seal gaps around frames before fall.

Prevention

Add door sweeps, repair screens and seal gaps around frames before fall.

Signs to look for

- Light under exterior doors
- Torn screens
- Bugs gathering on sills
- Drafts around frames

Do this now

1. Add door sweeps.
2. Repair torn screens.
3. Seal gaps around frames.

What the pro will do

1. Finds gaps around doors and frames.
2. Seals and treats entry points.
3. Suggests repairs that keep pests out.

> Check each fall.

TALK TO A LOCAL PRO
(855) 424-9709

SIDE BY SIDE

When to call a pro

Prevention is mostly yours. Active problems are a pest pro's job.

Do it yourself or call a pro?

	Do it yourself	Call a pest pro
PREVENTION	Sealing gaps, storing food, tipping water	Large gaps, attic and crawl space work
SIGNS	One-off sightings	Droppings, nests, mud tubes, bites
PESTS	Occasional ants or spiders	Rodents, bed bugs, termites, wasps
GOAL	Keep pests out	Remove an active problem

Still not sure? Describe what you see on the phone and a local pro can tell you which it is.

HOW TO

Prevention basics

Seal the gaps

Caulk and seal around pipes, wires and frames.

Fix moisture

Leaks and damp basements draw pests. A dehumidifier helps.

Clear the perimeter

Keep mulch, plants and firewood back from the house.

Store food sealed

Glass or hard plastic containers keep pantry pests out.

Check monthly

A quick look under sinks, in the basement and the attic catches problems early.

Plan for fall

Most mice move in when it gets cold. Seal up before then.

FILL THIS IN TODAY

Our home's pest log

Five minutes now spares you a scramble later. Keep this page with the guide.

Pests we've seen, and where:

Date of last treatment:

Areas with moisture problems:

Gaps and openings to seal:

Firewood and mulch locations:

Pest company we used before:

Notes:

THROUGH THE YEAR

Pests through the year

A few minutes each season heads off the most common problems.

Winter

- Watch for mice in the kitchen and attic.
- Check stored boxes.
- Keep firewood outside.
- Listen for scratching at night.

Spring

- Look for termite swarmers.
- Check eaves for small nests.
- Seal gaps before ants arrive.
- Clean the pantry.

Summer

- Tip out standing water weekly.
- Watch for wasps under decks.
- Inspect luggage after trips.
- Keep grass trimmed.

Fall

- Seal gaps before mice move in.
- Add door sweeps.
- Move firewood away from the house.
- Check sills for fall invaders.

QUESTIONS

Pest prevention questions

How do I keep mice out of my house?

Seal gaps around pipes, wires and doors, add door sweeps, store food in sealed containers and keep the kitchen clean at night.

What attracts roaches to a clean kitchen?

Water and warmth as much as food. Fix drips, dry the sink at night and seal gaps behind appliances.

How do I prevent pantry bugs?

Store dry goods in sealed containers, rotate older items and check new bags before putting them away.

How do I avoid bringing bed bugs home?

Inspect hotel beds, keep luggage off the bed, and wash and dry clothes hot when you get home.

How can I prevent termites?

Keep wood away from soil, fix leaks, run a dehumidifier in damp basements and have the foundation checked.

How do I keep wasps from building nests?

Seal gaps in eaves and siding, and check under eaves and decks in early spring when nests are small.

Pest prevention questions (continued)

How do I reduce mosquitoes in my yard?

Tip out standing water weekly, clean gutters and change birdbath water.

Why do I see more spiders in fall?

Many move indoors as it cools, and more spiders usually means more insects for them to eat.

How small a gap can a mouse fit through?

About the width of a dime.

When should I pest-proof my home?

Late summer to early fall, before rodents and fall invaders move inside.

Does mulch attract pests?

It holds moisture that draws ants and termites. Keep it a few inches back from the foundation.

When should I call a pest pro?

When you see droppings, nests, mud tubes or bites, or when a problem keeps coming back.

CUT OUT AND KEEP

When something goes wrong

1. Seal food and take out the trash.
2. Keep kids and pets away from droppings and nests.
3. Don't spray a wasp nest or set off foggers.
4. Sting with trouble breathing? Call 911 first.
5. Photograph droppings, bugs or damage.
6. Call a pest pro and describe what you see.

KEEP THIS NUMBER IN YOUR PHONE

(855) 424-9709

Scan for the online guide

with the 60-second problem finder and more answers.

www.pestguardco.com/pest-prevention-guide/

KEEP HANDY

Important numbers

Fill these in now, so you're not searching when something goes wrong.

Emergency: 911

Gas utility emergency line

Water utility

Electric utility

Plumber

Neighbor with a spare key

Policy number for your home

YOUR LOCAL PRO LINE

(855) 424-9709

Notes

PestGuardCo

PestGuardCo connects homeowners with independent local pest control companies for mice and rats, roaches, ants, bed bugs, termites, wasps and more.

How we're paid

PestGuardCo is a referral service. Homeowners don't pay us. Independent local companies in our network pay us when we connect them with homeowners who call. We don't perform the work, and any work, timing and terms are agreed directly between you and the company.

Important

This guide is general information, not advice for your specific home. Every home is different. In an emergency, or if anyone is in danger, call 911 first. Before you hire anyone, confirm they hold the credentials required for the work in your area. Same-day service is subject to availability. Calls may be recorded for quality purposes.

Photos

Photographs are stock images from Pexels and Unsplash, used under each site's terms, to illustrate common problems. They don't show specific companies, jobs or customers. Any people shown are models.

Keep pests out, room by room
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