



Nuisance Insects

Insects

The vast majority of insect species do not cause nuisance. They play an essential role pollinating plants, breaking down waste products, enriching the soil, and are essential as a food source for many other animals such as birds.

Statutory Nuisance and Insects

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 has amended the Statutory Nuisance provisions under Section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Statutory nuisances and inspections) relating to nuisance from insects. It relates to any insects emanating from relevant industrial, trade or business premises and being prejudicial to health or a nuisance, but excludes:

- land used as arable, grazing, meadow or pasture land
- land used as osier land, reed beds or woodland
- land used for market gardens, nursery grounds or orchards
- land included in a site of special scientific interest
- land forming part of an agricultural unit
- land covered by and the waters of any river or watercourse that is neither a sewer nor a drain or any lake or pond

It does not apply to insects that are categorised as wild animals under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, i.e. animals which are protected.

Most complaints are associated with:

- poultry houses / farms (buildings on agricultural land are not exempt from statutory nuisance from insects, even though the land surrounding them may be)
- sewage treatment works
- manure / silage storage areas
- animal housing
- stagnant ditches and drains (i.e. containing putrid and anoxic water) (provided they are on relevant industrial etc. premises)
- landfill sites / refuse tips
- waste transfer premises
- the commercial parts of mixed commercial / residential blocks of buildings (i.e. excluding the residential premises contained therein)
- trade or business premises (e.g. contaminated goods, kitchen areas)
- slaughterhouses
- used car tyre recycling businesses

If the local authority is satisfied that the insect problem amounts to a statutory nuisance it will serve an abatement notice. This may require the activity causing the nuisance to stop altogether, or that good practice is adopted to prevent a nuisance.

We can ask for accumulations of material to be removed, spread material to be ploughed in, areas to be cleaned – but our actions may not have an immediate effect upon fly numbers within the area

Those upon whom an abatement notice has been served have twenty-one days in which to appeal. Industrial, trade and business premises may offer the defence that 'best practicable means' were used to prevent or counteract the effects of a nuisance.

If a person on whom an abatement notice has been served fails, without reasonable cause, to comply they will have committed an offence. There is a fine of up to £20,000 upon summary conviction for failure to comply with an abatement notice issued for odour or insect nuisance from industrial, trade and business premises.

How many flies do there need to be for it to be a Statutory Nuisance?

Just as a noise does not need to be a specific volume to be a nuisance, there is no set number of flies. Guidance suggests that most people will be irritated by five or more flies flying in any one room, at any one time, on three successive days. When monitoring flies with baited traps, collecting more than 25 in any 48 hour period may indicate grounds for distress.

Can Pest Control Officers help?

Our Pest Control Officers will be able to help identify the species of fly which is causing the problem. This information will help confirm where the problem is coming from, and the best way to solve the problem.

We are able to provide effective chemical treatments for cluster flies, but are unlikely to be able to assist with Housefly or Lesser Housefly treatments. There are no chemicals which we can use outside.

We can provide an identification service free of charge, however if you want an officer to provide a chemical treatment our standard charges apply.

What fly control should I use?

Use flypapers rather than insecticide sprays. Besides being bad for the environment, insecticide sprays also cause fly populations to build up immunity as flies that survive will breed resistant young. Most flies will come into the property from outside. The most effective control is to stop them getting into your property. We recommend that you:

- Fit removable screens with close mesh to susceptible doors and windows to keep flies out. If possible keep doors and windows closed. Temporary screens can be formed by pinning/taping net curtain or voile fabric over open windows
- Wrap all food, particularly in summer. Even pet food is an attractant for flies so keep it covered
- Ensure compost heaps or rubbish are contained and do not cause an odour that can attract flies – we may be able to assist providing compost bins – see our waste and recycling pages.
- Clean up regularly after household pets such as dogs and cats. Clean rabbit hutches out regularly to avoid fly strike, which is a killer in rabbits

Making a Complaint

Before making a complaint to us it would be helpful if you could identify probable sources of the problem. Residents are a vital source of information in any investigation of an insect nuisance.

- Are there any farms / waste sites near you?
- What type of farms / waste sites?
- If farms: Do the animals appear well cared for and cleaned out regularly?
- For farmland: Identify whether there are any heaps of material waiting to be ploughed on nearby farmer's fields.
- Have there been problems in your area before?
- Have other residents nearby got the same or a similar insect problem?

Finding the source of insect nuisance can sometimes be a difficult and lengthy process, as premises which have high levels of insect infestation may be mistaken for the source when they might themselves also be sufferers.

As part of our investigation we need to consider:

- Duration: how long has the problem existed, or how long is it likely to continue.
- Frequency: has it occurred before, or is it anticipated to reoccur
- Impact: the problems the flies cause, do they prevent parts of the property being used, is there a likely health effect
- Local Environment
- Motive: is the problem a consequence of unreasonable behaviour, or normal actions

Further information about typical insect pests

The Common House Fly



The female house fly can lay 120-150 eggs at a time and, depending on the temperature, the eggs can hatch into maggots within 8-48 hours. The maggots then burrow into a food source. The new fly can emerge any time from four days in the summer months, to several weeks in the cooler weather. In this country, the earliest flies tend to emerge in May and the greatest numbers are usually found during August and September.

Breeding more or less ceases in October, except in heated premises. During the winter, the House Fly's life cycle is longer. The flies will breed in suitable indoor places and in decaying animal or vegetable matter, including rubbish heaps and horse manure.

Control: The Common House Fly is best controlled by taking preventative measures at source. Dustbins should be kept clean and all perishable food should be wrapped up. Once flies are in the house, fly papers, although unsightly, are effective, as are some 'knock down' insect sprays.

The Lesser House Fly



The Lesser House Fly has a similar life cycle to that of the Common House Fly, although it does not tend to move between waste matter and human food. It was once common in chicken manure but less so today. It is identifiable by its quick darting movements.

Control: As with the House Fly, control measures should be taken at source. Rubbish tips should be managed properly and any adult flies that emerge can be controlled by daily spraying.

Cluster Flies.



This fly gets its name from its habit of clustering like a swarm of bees. It is larger than the Common House Fly and can be easily identified as it folds its wings over its back.

Often attracted to the same sites every year, cluster flies leave a pheromone trail which the others follow. They leave in Spring and don't return until around September time.

Cluster flies are not known to pose a risk to human health. The Cluster Fly enters a house during autumn to hibernate and leaves again in spring, often causing a nuisance at these times. In the autumn, the flies tend to collect on the outside of buildings on warm elevations and later find their

way inside to cluster - sometimes in their thousands - in roof spaces, under tiles and in sash windows.

One building in a row, no different from the rest, may be heavily infested and its neighbour completely unaffected. The Cluster Fly is a parasite of earthworms which are usually readily available in any domestic garden.

Control: To kill the occasional fly, a 'knock down' spray can be effective. When flies are particularly troublesome, fly strips can be hung up in the roof spaces and any dead flies can be cleared up using a vacuum cleaner. Food should be kept covered at all times to prevent contamination.

To discourage flies mix up some dilute disinfectant and wipe around window and door frames. This solution destroys the pheromone trail and the other flies will be unable to follow. Vacuum up and dispose of dead flies.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
Civic Offices
Merrial Street
Newcastle
Staffs
ST5 2AG

Telephone 01782 742590
Email customerservices@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

