

## How to Socially Distance Your Patio from Pests

Warmer weather is here and that means outdoor living is in full swing. Restaurants and bars are getting their patios and outdoor spaces ready for the season. Unfortunately, nothing ruins a night out al fresco faster than the presence of pests. From rodents, flies, and wasps, these pesky pests can take the fun of being outdoors pretty quickly.

Pest activity around outdoor patios and bars is enough to put customers off and stop them from visiting your establishment ever again. A sighting of a mouse or clusters of flies buzzing around restaurants can prompt negative social media attention. It can also lead to failed inspections and audits by Public Health. Pests like rodents and flies contaminate food and spread disease which can threaten the health of your customers.

While we're used to seeing more pest activity during the spring and summer months, we can't forget that pests are huge health and safety offenders. Some pests are simply annoying, while others can carry pathogens and potentially dangerous diseases and, in the case of stingers, painful allergic reactions.



As patios open, we will begin to experience the sights and smells of food preparation and consumption away from homes. With restrictions lifting and patios opening, waste disposal will increase; rats, mice, and a whole slew of other insects will make their way back to areas abandoned since the pandemic once again.

### What's the best way to keep pests away and ensure a successful patio season?

- ▶ Keep trash cans tightly sealed to prevent rodents and flies from getting in and odours from getting out. Be sure to seal food waste in sealed plastic bags and empty and clean bins regularly.
- ▶ Clear tables with plates that contain food as quickly as possible. These serve as an invitation for flies.
- ▶ While potted flowers and greenery are attractive, they are a haven for stinging insects. Avoid planting colourful or fragrant flowers near your patio. Try fake foliage instead, it looks good and is less attractive!
- ▶ Remove any standing water. The smallest amount of water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- ▶ Wipe away crumbs on tables and sweep patio floors as ants look for crumbs left behind by guests.
- ▶ Keep restaurant doors closed when not in use to eliminate the potential of insects and rodents from getting inside your restaurant.

We're ready and excited about patio season! Be sure to contact your pest management professional before you open to walk through your pest control plan.