

HOME PEST PREVENTION WORKBOOK

Inspect. Prioritize. Seal. Monitor.

A room-by-room field guide with repair notes, safety limits, seasonal tasks, and clear thresholds for professional help.

Your 30-minute first pass

Walk the property once without treating anything. Photograph evidence, mark each item, and choose the repairs that remove the most food, water, shelter, or access.

Start here

- Put a date on this inspection and note who completed it.
- Photograph droppings, damage, insects, nests, stains, and entry gaps before cleaning or sealing.
- Move exposed food and pet food into rigid, closed containers; close rubbish and compost lids.
- Look under sinks and appliances for active leaks, condensation, or standing water.
- Check exterior doors, screens, utility penetrations, vents, roof edges, and foundation joints.
- Choose three actions for the next 48 hours. Start with sanitation and exclusion.

STOP AND ESCALATE: Do not disturb an unknown stinging-insect nest, enter an unsafe attic or crawlspace, handle a bat, seal an opening that may contain wildlife, or clean a heavy rodent infestation without situation-specific guidance.

Property snapshot

Inspection date	Home type / age	People / pets	Main concern

Priority actions

Priority	Repair or habit change	Owner	Due / done

1. Exterior perimeter

Inspect from the ground. Use a qualified person for rooflines, unsafe ladders, electrical hazards, or inaccessible spaces.

Foundation, siding, doors, and windows

■ Walk the foundation and mark cracks, missing sealant, damaged vents, and gaps around cables, pipes, or service lines.

■ Check every exterior door for visible daylight, worn sweeps, damaged thresholds, and doors that do not latch tightly.

■ Repair torn window or door screens and confirm frames close fully.

■ Inspect weep holes and required drainage openings; use an appropriate pest-resistant cover rather than sealing a building feature blindly.

■ Look for rub marks, gnawing, droppings, shed skins, mud tubes, frass, webbing, or repeated insect traffic.

Roof edge, vents, deck, and attached structures

■ From the ground, check soffits, fascia, vents, roof returns, chimneys, and siding transitions for damage or animal access.

■ Check deck ledgers, steps, sheds, garages, and stored materials for sheltered gaps and moisture damage.

■ Keep firewood off the soil and away from the house; move cardboard and dense clutter out of damp areas.

■ Trim branches and climbing plants that touch the roof or siding when safe to do so.

■ Before closing a wildlife-size opening, confirm it is vacant and check local rules or use a qualified wildlife professional.

Measure before you buy: record the length, width, material, moisture exposure, and whether the opening must remain ventilated or drain water. Match the repair material to the building function.

Exterior repair map

Location / photo	Evidence or gap	Size	Repair material	Done

2. Kitchen, pantry, laundry, and bathrooms

Pests persist where food, water, heat, and hiding space overlap. Check the quiet edges rather than the center of each room.

Kitchen and pantry

- Empty one lower cabinet at a time; inspect corners, hinges, shelf holes, pipe openings, and the kick plate.
- Check behind and beneath the refrigerator, range, dishwasher, toaster, bin, and pet feeding area.
- Transfer opened grains, flour, cereal, seed, and pet food to rigid containers with tight lids.
- Discard infested packages in a sealed bag and vacuum shelf seams; inspect nearby unopened packages.
- Clean grease, crumbs, spills, and residue along edges and under appliances.
- Do not leave pet food out overnight when pest pressure is active; clean the bowl area.

Laundry, utility, and bathrooms

- Check supply lines, traps, toilet bases, washing-machine hoses, floor drains, and water-heater areas for leaks or condensation.
- Dry wet cabinets and materials; arrange repair of plumbing or persistent moisture rather than masking the symptom.
- Inspect pipe and drain penetrations without blocking access, drainage, or ventilation.
- Remove lint and stored paper from damp edges; keep floor drains and rarely used fixtures maintained appropriately.
- Check bath fans and visible ventilation outlets for damage or blockage; escalate electrical or duct work.

RODENT WASTE: Do not sweep or vacuum dry droppings, urine, or nesting material. CDC advises wetting contaminated material with disinfectant, allowing the label contact time, wiping it up while wearing gloves, and using extra precautions for heavy infestations.

Moisture and sanitation log

Room / location	Food, water, or shelter found	Correction	Recheck date

3. Bedrooms, living spaces, attic, basement, and garage

Use a flashlight and work in a repeatable pattern: doorway clockwise, low to high, then furniture and stored items.

Bedrooms and living spaces

■ Inspect mattress seams, bed frames, upholstered furniture seams, skirting boards, and nearby luggage after unexplained bites or spotting.

■ Check window tracks, curtain folds, indoor plants, and light fixtures for insects, webbing, moisture, or dead specimens.

■ Reduce floor-level clutter and avoid moving suspect furniture between rooms before identification.

■ Seal food and rubbish; vacuum routine dust and debris only when it is not rodent-contaminated.

Attic, basement, crawlspace, and garage

■ Inspect only from safe, stable access. Stop for exposed wiring, damaged flooring, unsafe ladders, strong odors, or difficult entry.

■ Look for roof leaks, condensation, stained insulation, damaged vents, droppings, nesting, gnawing, and daylight at edges.

■ Store animal feed, grass seed, and edible supplies in robust closed containers.

■ Keep stored goods off damp floors where practical and replace collapsing cardboard.

■ Check garage-door corners, weather seals, shared-wall penetrations, and the door into the home.

Call a qualified professional for heavy contamination, repeated activity after repairs, suspected structural damage, termites, inaccessible nests, unsafe heights, or animals inside walls, ducts, chimneys, or occupied roof spaces.

Room-by-room score

Score each room 0 = clear, 1 = watch, 2 = action needed, 3 = professional assessment. Recheck any 2 or 3 after the corrective work.

Room	Food	Water	Shelter	Entry	Total	Recheck

4. Yard and seasonal prevention

Change habitat first. Broad, routine spraying can miss the cause and expose people, pets, pollinators, and wildlife unnecessarily.

Weekly warm-season round
■ Empty and scrub, turn over, cover, or discard containers that hold water, including saucers, toys, buckets, and birdbaths.
■ Tightly cover water storage. Use an appropriate fine mesh where a cover is impossible.
■ Pick up fallen fruit, spilled feed, rubbish, and pet waste; close compost and bin lids.
■ Check dense vegetation against the building and clear access for inspection.
■ Inspect outdoor pet areas, grills, furniture, play equipment, and sheds for harborage or nests before use.

SEASON	PRIORITY CHECKS	NOTES / DATE
Spring	Repair screens; inspect moisture and emerging insect traffic; clear winter debris; check roof drainage from the ground.	
Summer	Weekly water-container round; secure food and rubbish; inspect stinging-insect activity before yard work.	
Autumn	Door sweeps and utility gaps; reduce seed and fruit; inspect stored items before bringing them indoors.	
Winter	Monitor attics, garages, and utility rooms; correct leaks; inspect stored food and holiday boxes.	

Wildlife and nests: laws, protected species, maternity seasons, and relocation rules vary by location. Confirm occupancy and current local requirements before exclusion or removal.

Yard action log

Location	Attractant / evidence	Action	Recheck

5. Identify and monitor before treating

A useful record answers four questions: what, where, when, and whether the count is rising or falling.

Collect useful evidence safely

- Photograph the specimen beside a coin or ruler without touching an unknown animal or stinging insect.
- Record the exact room, surface, time, weather, and nearby food, water, damage, or entry point.
- Use a clear container or sealed bag only when collection is safe; label it with date and location.
- Place monitoring traps only where children and pets cannot reach them and where the product permits.
- Count consistently at the same interval. A falling count after sanitation and exclusion is more useful than a single sighting.

Evidence log

Date / time	Exact location	Evidence / count	Likely ID	Photo / sample

Escalation guide

ACT NOW: A bite, sting reaction, poisoning concern, electrical damage, active fire risk, or aggressive animal. Use emergency, poison-control, medical, veterinary, or local animal-control services as appropriate.

PROFESSIONAL INSPECTION: Termite signs, repeated bed bug evidence, inaccessible stinging nests, bats or wildlife in a structure, heavy rodent contamination, structural damage, or daily activity after two weeks of correct prevention and monitoring.

CONTINUE MONITORING: A single identified incidental pest with no damage, no repeated captures, and no continuing food, water, shelter, or entry source.

6. Treatment safety and hiring checklist

Use the least disruptive method that matches a confirmed pest and location. Product labels govern product-specific use.

Before using any pesticide

■ Confirm the pest and that the label lists both the target pest and intended application site.

■ Read the complete label, including protective equipment, ventilation, re-entry, storage, disposal, and pet or child directions.

■ Use the stated amount. More is not better. Never use an outdoor-only product indoors.

■ Keep the product in its original labeled container; never transfer it to food or drink packaging.

■ Remove or protect children, pets, toys, food, dishes, and bedding exactly as the label requires.

■ Target the affected location. Do not substitute broad room spraying for sanitation, repair, or exclusion.

Questions for a pest or wildlife professional

■ What evidence supports the identification, and what is the source of the problem?

■ Which sanitation, moisture, repair, or exclusion work is included in the quote?

■ Which products and EPA registration numbers will be used, where, and why?

■ What must people and pets do before treatment, and what is the label-directed re-entry condition?

■ How many visits and follow-ups are included? What result triggers a different plan?

■ Is the operator licensed where required, insured, and experienced with this exact problem?

■ For wildlife, how will occupancy, dependent young, species rules, and legal timing be checked?

Quote comparison

Company	Diagnosis / source correction	Visits / guarantee	Products	Total

Keep the service report, product names, EPA registration numbers, instructions, invoice, and follow-up date together. If the diagnosis changes, update the plan before adding products.

7. Your 14-day action plan

A short feedback loop prevents endless treatment. Fix causes, monitor the same locations, and change course only when the evidence supports it.

WHEN	ACTION	DONE / NOTES
Day 0	Photograph and log evidence. Remove accessible food and water. Do not disturb high-risk nests, wildlife, or contaminated material.	
Days 1-2	Complete the three priority repairs or book qualified help. Install safe monitors where useful.	
Days 3-7	Repeat sanitation and water checks. Record trap counts or sightings at the same time and locations.	
Day 7	Compare counts and new evidence. Inspect repaired entry points. Correct failures rather than adding random treatments.	
Day 14	If activity is not clearly falling, reassess identification and missed sources or arrange a professional inspection.	

Trusted references

[US EPA - Do's and Don'ts of Pest Control](#)

Prevention, label use, storage, disposal, children, pets, and targeted treatment.

[CDC - How to Clean Up After Rodents](#)

Current precautions for urine, droppings, nesting material, and heavy infestations.

[CDC - Mosquito Control at Home](#)

Weekly water-container management, screens, and home mosquito control.

[US EPA - Reducing Pesticide Impacts on Wildlife](#)

Targeted use, storage, disposal, water protection, pollinators, and non-target wildlife.

Useful HowToRepel tools

[Household insect identification guide](#) | [Pest control cost calculator](#) | [Repellent evidence database](#)

This workbook is educational and cannot diagnose a species, building defect, exposure, or medical or veterinary condition. Follow product labels and current local requirements. Seek qualified help when the task, species, contamination, access, or risk exceeds safe DIY work.

Reviewed October 9, 2026. Source links above were checked during preparation.