

Choosing a pest control contract: A Checklist for Business Owners

Pest control can become a large expense for a business, especially for small business owners whose pest worries are only exacerbated due to Somerville's age and density. Here is a checklist to help you evaluate your current pest control contract, or choose a new one to ensure that you're getting the most for your money.

A good pest control company will:

Prioritize “**Integrated Pest Management**” (IPM)

- IPM is the coordinated implementation of a variety of pest control techniques, emphasizing prevention and exclusion over traditional baiting and trapping, and is currently the most effective method of pest control.

Have the right **experience**

- Ask for references from prior commercial customers, especially from businesses that are similar in size and type to yours.
- Be sure that their references or website mention that they have the services and knowledge to target the types of pests you are looking to eliminate.

Base services and quotes on property **inspections**

- Companies that offer flat fees or one-size-fits-all service will not provide you with the most effective pest control. A good company will assess your business's pest control needs before offering any type of service plan or price.
- Many companies perform an initial property inspection for free, so interview multiple companies and compare prices and service offerings before making a decision.
- Walk around with the pest control technician whenever you can to assess the work being done and learn more about pest control.

Make **recommendations** for structural or procedural modifications to reduce pest activity

- A good company will let you know if there are any other actions that can be taken to reduce pest activity, such as sealing up places where pests can access a building or removal of food sources. Try to follow these recommendations whenever possible to make the lethal pest control even more effective.

Employ **licensed** technicians

- Any professional who uses pesticides is required to have a valid Massachusetts State Pesticide Applicator License. Have a copy of the technician's license on hand for the duration of the work performed on the property, as well as copies of the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and EPA Labels for any pesticides used.