

Selecting a Pest Management Professional

A Pest Management Professional (PMP) is someone who can help you control various insect and rodent pests encountered in and/or around your structure. When the need arises for you to contract the services of a PMP there are several things to consider. The following “tips for finding a pro” are suggested by the National Pest Management Association (NPMA):

1. Always deal with a qualified and licensed pest management company. Consider asking to see the license or other credentials of the pest control professional that comes to solve your pest problem.
2. Evaluate pest control companies that are members of national, state or local pest management associations.
3. Ask friends and neighbors to recommend pest control companies they have used successfully and how satisfied they were with the service.
4. Be wary of the exterminator who comes to your home uninvited and offers to give your house a free inspection for pests. He or she may try to scare you into authorizing immediate and costly treatments.
5. If a sizable amount of money is involved, get bids from several pest management companies.
6. Don't rush a decision. Since you are paying for professional knowledge as well as skillful application of pesticides, look for someone whose judgment you can trust.
7. Before signing a contract, be sure to fully understand the nature of the household pest to be exterminated, the extent of the infestation, and the work necessary to solve the problem.
8. Find out if the pest control company has liability insurance to cover any damages to your house or furnishings during treatment.
9. If a guarantee is given, know what it covers, how long it lasts, what you must do to keep it in force, and what kind of continuing control, prevention and management are necessary.
10. Buy value, not price. Beware of exterminators that offer bargains that sound too good to be true.

If a pesticide treatment is necessary, the product needs to be registered for use in New York State with the **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC)**. The product must also have instructions on its label for controlling the pest in question as well as the site in or around the structure where the pesticide application will be made. The applicator must follow all rules and regulations established by the NYSDEC regarding the use of a pesticide. In New York State a pest control business must be registered with the NYSDEC. Depending on the specific type of pesticide application to be made, the person making the application needs to be a NYS DEC - certified pesticide applicator, technician, or apprentice. For clarification refer to the NYS DEC web site given below. In Suffolk County the pest control business must be licensed with the **Suffolk County Executive's Office of Consumer Affairs, Bureau of Licensing**. Liability insurance is also a requirement. You can check with your local town or village to see if additional requirements exist for a business operating in your locale.

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Agencies and Associations

The ***Horticulture Information Line at Cornell Cooperative Extension - Suffolk County (631-727-4126)*** can provide you with help in the following ways: identification of insects or insect-related problems, information on control options, information on insect pests, their habits and the damage they may cause.

The ***NYS DEC (631-444-0340)*** can tell you if the company in question is registered with their department as a pesticide application business. You can also determine if an individual is a NYS DEC-licensed certified pesticide applicator or technician. The agency regulates and enforces the use of pesticides in New York State. They will be able to provide you with information on any rules and regulations, which may apply to the application of a pesticide in and around your premises. The NYS DEC does not make pest control recommendations. If you have access to the Internet visit the NYS DEC web site <http://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/209.html>. On the web site you can do your own search to determine if a company is a NYS DEC registered business, if a person is a licensed certified pesticide applicator, technician or apprentice, as well as the laws and regulations pertaining the application of pesticides in NYS.

The ***NYSPAD (New York State Pesticide Applicator Database) website*** maintained by the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation) has a searchable database for pesticide products currently registered in New York State at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/nyspad/products?0>. You will be able to search for a pesticide by entering the product name, active ingredient or EPA Registration Number. Once you locate a particular product you will be able to view the product label to determine if it is labeled to control the pest you are dealing with as well as the intended site of the application (i.e. perimeter application, crack and crevice application, indoors only, outdoors only, etc.)

The ***Suffolk County Executive's Office of Consumer Affairs (631-853-4600)*** (<http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/consumeraffairs.aspx>) can provide you with information pertaining to complaints filed against a company in question. They will also be able to tell you if the company in question is licensed. They **can not** provide you with a list of recommended companies, but you are able to search for Suffolk County contractors with current valid licenses on their web site.

The ***National Pest Management Association (NPMA)*** is a non-profit organization and according to its web site is committed to the protection of public health, food and property. The Associations web site (<http://www.pestworld.org/>) serves as a comprehensive resource for consumers, media, educators and pest control professionals. Consumers can search for an NPMA professional on this web site. You may also contact the Association at 10460 North Street, Fairfax, VA 22030. Phone: (703) 352-6762, Fax: (703) 352-3031.

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