



## **Guideline on Preventing, Detecting and Treating Insect Infestation**

### **Preventing Insect Infestation**

The most effective way to prevent insect infestations is to maintain a clean, cool, and dry environment. Boxes also provide a protective barrier which can lessen the chance of insect damage. Here are some guidelines for preventing insect infestation:

- Do not take food and drink into the storage area
- Empty rubbish bins regularly
- Do not allow plants and cut flowers in record storage areas
- Establish and maintain a regular housekeeping schedule to eliminate dirt
- Reduce temperature and humidity
- Place screens on all doors (and windows if you have windows that will open)
- Do not leave doors (or windows) open
- Seal any cracks or holes in the storage area walls, such as around pipes
- Place screens or filters over drains and vents
- Position dustbins away from the building
- Avoid having plants within a foot of the building
- Check new transfers of records to make sure they are not infested with insects

### **Detecting Insect Infestation**

Checking your records regularly will allow you to detect evidence of insects before it affects many records. Remember that it is not necessary to check everything, just an adequate sample of your holdings. The following table gives information on what to look for and how to recognise signs of insect infestation.



## Recognising Signs of Insect Infestation

Type of evidence	What to look for	Where to look
Live insects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Scuttling bugs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ between papers</li><li>▪ in creases of papers and file covers</li><li>▪ within cracks and crevices of boxes and shelves (particularly wooden shelves)</li></ul>
Insect remains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ whole carcasses</li><li>▪ body parts</li><li>▪ cast-skins</li><li>▪ wings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ on window sills</li><li>▪ in creases of papers and file covers</li><li>▪ within cracks and crevices of boxes and shelves</li></ul>
Frass/Droppings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ pellets</li><li>▪ "poppy-seed"</li><li>▪ "saw-dust"</li><li>▪ suspicious piles of fine dust or powder (varies widely in colour)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ within boxes</li><li>▪ on shelves</li><li>▪ on papers</li></ul>
Damage caused by eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ holes/tunnels which continue from one page to next page(s)</li><li>▪ damage along edges of pages protruding from stack</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ in papers</li><li>▪ through files</li></ul>

In addition to physically checking the storage area and boxes, you can also use insect traps, which can catch insects before you have detected them. It is best to dust shelving and window sills after each regular inspection of the storage area. This makes subsequent evidence of insect life more obvious.



## Treating Insect Infestation

If you detect insect infestation, there are several things you must do:

- Collect evidence that will enable you to identify the type of pest you are dealing with
- Review your storage area with a view to modifying the habitat to encourage the insects to leave
- Treat the infested material
- Contact ARMS to notify them of the problem and to seek advice and support

With respect to identifying insects, there is a lot of information on the Internet, but local staff and other local sources should be able to help. In reviewing your storage, look at where the infestation is most obvious and try to identify why it has happened there. Try to discover what they have been eating or where they are living and reproducing and eliminate the sources. Run through the list of preventative measures and make sure they are all in place.

When deciding how to treat insect infestation, remember that one or two insects may not warrant drastic measures. You should monitor carefully for evidence of a colony before taking action. You should also check around the area where you have found evidence of insects to see how far the infestation has spread.

- You can vacuum records that are not too fragile – remember to empty the vacuum bags immediately
- Consult with ARMS and local experts to find a non-chemical method to kill the insect. This can include freezing and solar bagging, which uses sunlight to produce temperatures lethal to insects
- Do not use any substance (especially insecticide) directly on the records, as this can harm both records and human beings
  - If chemicals are necessary, use only those that are appropriate for the specific insect you are treating
  - Select the least toxic pesticide available

**Contact [ARMS](#) before using any chemical fumigation treatment methods because of risks to humans from these treatments.**