



DISTRICT PEST CONTROL LTD

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

FLEA INSPECTION, TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT

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1. PURPOSE

This procedure provides the standard method for the inspection, treatment and management of flea infestations within domestic and commercial premises.

The objective is to achieve effective control through an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach whilst ensuring the safety of technicians, customers, non-target animals and the environment.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all District Pest Control technicians undertaking:

- Flea inspections
- Flea treatments
- Follow-up visits
- Customer advice and monitoring

The procedure primarily relates to infestations of the Cat Flea (*Ctenocephalides felis*), the most common flea species encountered within the United Kingdom and Ireland.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Technician

The technician shall:

- Conduct a site-specific risk assessment.
- Confirm evidence of flea activity.
- Provide preparation instructions.
- Apply treatments in accordance with product labels.
- Provide post-treatment advice.
- Maintain accurate treatment records.

Customer

The customer is responsible for:

- Completing all preparation requirements.
- Ensuring pets receive appropriate veterinary flea treatment.
- Following all post-treatment instructions.
- Reporting ongoing activity where necessary.

4. FLEA BIOLOGY AND LIFE CYCLE

Understanding the flea life cycle is essential for successful control.

Fleas develop through four stages:

Egg

Adult fleas living on animals lay eggs which fall into:

- Carpets
- Rugs
- Upholstered furniture
- Floor cracks
- Pet bedding

Larva

Larvae hatch from eggs and move into dark protected areas where they feed on organic debris and flea dirt.

Pupa

Larvae develop into pupae within protective cocoons.

This is the most resistant stage of the flea life cycle.

Pupae are protected from many insecticide treatments and may remain dormant for extended periods before emerging.

Adult

Adult fleas emerge when stimulated by:

- Vibration
- Heat
- Carbon dioxide
- Human or animal movement

Under favourable indoor conditions the complete flea life cycle may be completed within approximately 21 days.

For this reason flea populations can increase rapidly if left untreated.

5. PRE-TREATMENT REQUIREMENTS

Treatment of Pets

All dogs and cats within the property must receive effective flea treatment from:

- A veterinary surgeon
- A veterinary nurse
- A recognised veterinary-approved flea control programme

Property treatment alone will not resolve an infestation if animals remain untreated.

District Pest Control reserves the right to postpone treatment where pets have not received appropriate flea control.

Vacuuming

Prior to treatment the customer shall thoroughly vacuum:

- Carpets
- Rugs
- Upholstered furniture
- Skirting board edges
- Under furniture
- Pet resting areas

Vacuum contents must be sealed and disposed of immediately.

Laundry

Pet bedding, blankets and washable fabrics should be:

- Washed at 60°C where fabric care instructions permit
- Thoroughly dried before reuse

A complete wash cycle at 60°C is generally sufficient to kill flea eggs, larvae and adult fleas.

Room Preparation

Customers should:

- Remove items from floors where practical.
- Reduce clutter.
- Lift lightweight items from treatment areas.
- Provide access to all affected rooms.

6. INSPECTION PROCEDURE

The technician shall inspect:

- Pet resting areas
- Carpets and rugs
- Upholstered furniture
- Bedrooms
- Living rooms
- Floor-wall junctions
- Areas beneath furniture

Evidence may include:

- Live fleas
- Flea dirt
- Larvae
- Customer reports of bites
- Excessive scratching by pets

Findings shall be recorded on the treatment report.

7. TREATMENT PROCEDURE

Treatment shall only be undertaken following confirmation of flea activity.

The technician shall:

1. Complete a site-specific risk assessment.
2. Confirm customer preparation has been completed.
3. Ensure occupants and pets vacate treatment areas where required.
4. Apply approved insecticides and/or insect growth regulators in accordance with product labels.
5. Treat identified harbourage areas.

Particular attention shall be given to:

- Carpet edges
- Pet resting areas
- Under furniture
- Soft furnishings

- Floor-wall junctions

Products shall only be used at approved application rates.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Prior to treatment technicians shall identify:

- Fish tanks
- Aquariums
- Reptile enclosures
- Food preparation areas
- Water sources

Fish tanks and aquariums must be protected prior to treatment.

Pesticides shall not be applied:

- Directly to animals
- Into drains
- Into watercourses
- Onto food preparation surfaces

All reasonable precautions shall be taken to prevent environmental contamination.

9. POST-TREATMENT ADVICE

Customers shall be advised that flea activity may continue following treatment.

This is normal and does not necessarily indicate treatment failure.

Following treatment:

- Adult fleas may continue to emerge from previously protected pupae.
- Fleas may appear more active immediately after treatment.
- Flea sightings may continue for several weeks.
- Newly emerged fleas will contact treated surfaces and die.

Customers should continue monitoring activity and report any significant concerns.

10. VACUUMING AFTER TREATMENT

Customers should avoid vacuuming treated areas for a minimum of 10–14 days unless otherwise instructed.

Following this period:

- Regular vacuuming should resume.

- Particular attention should be given to carpets, skirting boards and pet resting areas.

Vacuuming assists flea control by stimulating pupae to emerge from their cocoons, exposing newly emerged fleas to residual insecticide deposits.

11. FOLLOW-UP TREATMENTS

Due to the nature of the flea life cycle, follow-up treatments may be required.

A second treatment may be recommended where:

- Heavy infestations are present.
- Ongoing activity is reported.
- Multiple pets are present.
- Preparation instructions have not been followed.

Follow-up visits are normally undertaken between 7 and 14 days after the initial treatment.

Under favourable indoor conditions the flea life cycle may be completed within approximately 21 days and newly emerged adults may continue to appear after the first treatment.

The requirement for additional treatments shall be determined by the technician based on inspection findings and customer reports.

12. CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Customers should understand that flea control is a process rather than an instant solution.

The pupal stage is naturally protected from many insecticides and may continue to hatch after treatment.

As a result:

- Fleas may still be seen after treatment.
- Flea bites may continue temporarily.
- Increased activity immediately following treatment is not uncommon.
- Additional visits may be required for heavy infestations.

Successful control depends upon:

- Treatment of all pets.
- Customer preparation.
- Compliance with aftercare instructions.
- Follow-up treatment where necessary.

13. REFUSAL OF TREATMENT

District Pest Control may refuse or postpone treatment where:

- Pets have not been treated appropriately.
- Preparation instructions have not been followed.
- Safe access cannot be achieved.
- Significant health, safety or environmental risks are identified.

Reasons for refusal shall be documented.

14. RECORDS

The technician shall record:

- Areas inspected
- Evidence located
- Products used
- Quantities applied
- Risk assessment findings
- Customer advice issued
- Follow-up recommendations

Treatment reports shall be completed for every visit.

15. REVIEW

This procedure shall be reviewed annually or following:

- Legislative changes
- Product changes
- Significant incidents
- Changes to industry guidance

16. SUMMARY

Effective flea control requires:

- Accurate identification
- Veterinary treatment of all pets
- Thorough customer preparation
- Professional insecticide application
- Customer cooperation
- Follow-up treatment where required

Failure to treat pets or comply with preparation and aftercare instructions may result in continued flea activity and re-infestation.

END OF DOCUMENT