



# Technical Bulletin

Setting the Standard for Food Safety and Pest Management Solutions

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## Wash Your Hands



Medical News Today

In 1847, a Hungarian obstetrician by the name of Ignaz P. Semmelweis showed that hand washing greatly reduced infections in newborns. Dr. Semmelweis attempted to promote hand washing and cleanliness among his colleagues, who were so offended that they committed him to an insane asylum. Handwashing saves lives through five simple steps: **Wet, Lather, Scrub, Rinse, Dry**. Easy to do and only takes little time but still a continual concern in the health and food industries.

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. Hand washing is so important, it is actually the law and is enforceable.

Transferring germs doesn't just mean hand to hand, hand to food, etc. Germs from unwashed hands can be transferred to other objects, like handrails, table tops, utensils, ingredient cartons, and then transferred to another person's hands.

Promote proper hand washing practices, enforce internal policies and ensure the proper resources are available to accomplish this. Glove usage does not replace proper hand washing practices.

**Submitted by: Rich Gibson, ACE, CHA**

## The Yellow Meal Worm



**Order:** Coleoptera **Family:** Tenebrionidae **Genus:** Tenebrio

Mealworms are among some of the largest insect pests of stored products. The common name is derived from the color of the wireworm-like larvae. Yellow mealworms are in the genus *Tenebrio*, meaning "darkness," owing to the nocturnal habits of the larvae. The adult is a polished dark brown or black beetle about one-half inch long. Its thorax is finely punctured, and its wing covers are longitudinally striated or grooved. There is only one generation each year.

Mealworms have generally been considered pests, because their larvae feed on stored grains. Mealworms probably originated in the Mediterranean region, but are now present in many areas of the world, spread by human trade and colonization.

Prevention is the best strategy to avoid insect problems in stored grains. Before grain is placed in a bin it should be screened to eliminate fine materials and broken kernels. Grain placed in a clean bin should be checked at two-week intervals during warm months and at one-month intervals during cooler months for the presence of hot spots, moldy areas, and live insects. If any of these conditions exist, the grain should be aerated to lower the moisture level and temperature. If infestation occurs in spite of these precautions, fumigation of the grain will be necessary.

**Submitted by: Rich Gibson, ACE, CHA**



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## Mice in the Floors



After years of servicing a large client facility in central Pennsylvania with no rodent pressure, it was hard to believe the facility QA Manager called regarding several cases of returned product that had rodent damage inside the boxes. After reviewing the photos and the damaged product, it was easy to conclude the damage was indeed caused by mice. The RKE teams reached out to the client and immediately set up an appointment to review any pest finding and to

complete an intensive facility inspection. The trending information at the plant showed no rodent activity and the inspection revealed the same.

After reviewing the findings with the client and a long-detailed conversation about where the affected product was stored. We came to the conclusion the product was damaged at the off-site storage locations. As time went on, the escalation of rodent damage increased and then off-site warehouses returned a trailer full of product with mice. The trailer was isolated and a fumigation was completed, all suspect product was discarded. Slowly, rodent started to appear in the mechanical devices and damaged product was noted inside the facility. The team completed several intensive snap trap treatments at the plant but the issue was only growing.

It was decided to take a team of RKE Service Specialist to the facility and complete a "deep dig" inspection focusing on rodents. What we found was exciting for the team and the client as well. During the inspection a Service Specialist found mice chewing through the floor joint in the basement area, this area is 15 feet below ground level. Continuing on with the inspection to the upper level of the warehouse, several small holes were found in the floor joints in the entire warehouse. While inspecting the holes it was clear the mice were running in the expansion joints. The mice at this facility had access to over quarter mile of runways in the warehouse area. After showing the client our findings, we were able to convince their team to start removing the old expansion joints in the basement area to deter the rodent activity.

RKE was on site the day the contractor started the replacement of the old expansion joints. As the work started on expansion joint removal the QA manager rushed into the office and asked the RKE Manager to grab everything available for the control of mice. Snap traps and glue boards were collected and taken to the basement. Upon speaking with the contractors, it was discussed the contractor had found piles of torn paper and plastic and when they started to remove the material, mice poured out from under the slab. The Maintenance Manager explained that more than 50 mice came running out from under the slab foundation and how shocked he was. Also, he went on to explain he did not believe the pest control contractor when we requested repairing the gap issue over the past several months to help deter the rodent issue.

Determination, inspections and documentation of the rodent issues has convinced the client to continue with the repairs of the expansion joints not only in the basement area but expanded it to the entire warehouse. This project work will be continual until all activity has been eradicated. This is expected to take several months to a full-year with five days of service each week.

**Submitted by: Anthony Krakowski**  
**Regional Operations Manager**