



Technical Bulletin

Setting the Standard for Food Safety and Pest Management Solutions

July 2019

Volume 9, Issue 7

Commitment to Food Safety & Quality

Policy Statement



"We are committed"

One of the first clauses you come across in most Audit Schemes is centered around a policy statement of some sort. The required policy statement indicates senior management's support of the food safety management system, their commitment to ensuring safe wholesome products through the establishments of objectives, implementation of a HACCP Based system, and so on.

There is so much more to this statement than is understood. It is more than a printed statement posted for all to see and presented to an auditor for an easy point. Sure, posting it at the timeclock meets minimum requirements, on paper. Employees need to understand the meaning behind it, not know where it is posted at or know it word for word, they do need to understand the importance of meeting regulatory requirements, their moral obligations, customer specifications, and the need for continual improvement. Management commitment is a culture in which all employees are unified in their way of thinking about food safety. Meeting an audit requirement is not a commitment to food safety.

Learning the hard way that the policy statement is more than a piece of paper has opened the eyes of many organizations with the recent, and well deserved, focus on food safety & quality culture. Organizations need to stop for a moment and think if they are truly committed or simply want the certificate from a third party so they can continue making a product for their private label customer.

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

The Phorid Fly



USDA Agricultural Research Center

Class: Insecta **Order:** Diptera **Family:** Phoridae

The Phorid fly, also known as humpbacked flies because of their arched thorax, phorid flies are dark colored and tiny, 0.5–6 mm (1/64–1/4 in) in length. When viewed from the side, there is a pronounced hump to the thorax. The head is usually rounded and, in some species, narrowed towards the vertex.

Phorid flies can often be identified by their escape habit of running rapidly across a surface rather than flying away. This behavior is a source of one of their alternate names, scuttle fly. Phorid flies are found worldwide, though the greatest variety of species is to be found in tropical areas. About 4,000 species are known in 230 genera.

This filth fly undergoes complete metamorphosis; developing from eggs into larval, and pupal stages before emerging as adults. The female will lay anywhere from 1 to 100 eggs at a time, in or on the larval food. The female can lay up to 750 eggs in their lifetime. The larvae emerge in 24 hours and feed for a period between 8 and 16 days, before crawling to a drier spot to pupate. The phorid fly's egg-to-adult life cycle can be as short as 14 days, but may take up to 37 days.

Flies are not always breeding in the areas where they are observed. Adult females will often fly to light, or actively seek out other breeding sites within a structure. To control this filth fly, the source of attraction and breeding needs to be identified and removed. Mechanical control, such as trapping and chemical control are only effective in controlling the adults. Only inspection, sanitation and moisture control will lead to successful eradication of this pest.

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



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Temporary Restraining Order



A new RK Environmental Services (RKE) client was recently “shut down” by the state health department due to multiple failed inspections, which were not handled properly by the client. The main issues associated with the TRO (Temporary Restraining Order) were pest infestation and poor sanitation practices. Due to the wide scope of deficiencies at the location, RKE's sister company, Comprehensive Food Safety (CFS) was called in for emergency consultation to remedy the sanitation concerns while educating the client's team with RKE tackling the pest concerns.

To expedite the corrective action process and to get the bakery up and running again RKE & CFS partnered with the client for daily visits. CFS provided consultation for the client through a major deep cleaning, which was the first step in addressing pest infestation. RKE provided simultaneous consultation and treatment. The plan of attack included the elimination of food/water source, harborage/nesting sites, along with facility entry points. The client is a small volume bakery and reused product boxes that were returned from customers, a common yet poor practice. This practice was contributing to the introduction of pests into the facility.

Due to the presence of flour, coupled with moisture & humidity from hosing down the area and wet cleaning, the interior of the production equipment had risen dough, which was inches thick. It was also determined the client never cleaned the interior of the equipment and only focused on “what you could see.” Pitted concrete floors allowed water to accumulate, yet another pest attractant which could also harbor harmful pathogens.



Numerous pest harborage sites were identified and corrected by the RKE/CFS team with assistance from the client's maintenance personnel. Some of these issues included unsealed equipment bases, holes and cracks in cinder block walls, interior equipment compartments, walk-in cooler wall panels (in place and in storage), and the mezzanine areas where employees rarely went. To add complexity to the issues, multiple rodent nests were found in stacks of returned boxes being reused with top boxes in rotation and the bottom boxes never touched.

As food/water was eliminated and harborage/entry points addressed, the pest population was pushed out from the center production area to the more obscure hard to access depths of the facility.

After a few weeks of intensive cleaning and addressing pest issues, activity was much less evident, but still very present. A list of other issues was being corrected simultaneously in their attempt to reopen. After almost a month of being shut down, the state inspector returned for reinspection. The facility passed the re-inspection and was allowed to resume production. Client was instructed that a follow up state inspection will be conducted within 45 days of resuming production.

As of today, the bakery has a clean bill of health thanks to the teamwork provided by CFS & RKE. The client recognized the value of professional collaboration and learned a very valuable lesson. Public health is a serious business and it is best to have the professionals guide you through the process.

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