

# What Governmental Agencies Should Look for in a Mosquito Abatement Company

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## Legal requirements

Texas has some of the most stringent rules in the nation relating to pest control. Before companies can engage in structural pest control activities (spraying around homes and businesses for roaches, rats and mosquitoes, for example), they must be licensed with the Texas Structural Pest Control Board (SPCB). Licenses are required for a business, the applicators and the employees who make treatment recommendations by phone.

Governmental entities (cities, counties, school districts) often need assistance in controlling disease-transmitting pests, such as mosquitoes.

## Contracts

The following are some important points that should be considered when selecting a pest control company and negotiating a contract:

- ◆ **The contract should itemize the services to be provided.**  
The contract also should detail how the business charges for its services. Many pest control companies offer only spraying services to control mosquito problems. If you want mitigation efforts (e.g., repairing screens, clearing debris that dams water or trimming shrubs), be sure the contract details this information. It is important to know if additional fees will be incurred when mitigation services are included.
- ◆ **An effective abatement program must include educational outreach activities.**  
This will allow the government's public relations office to distribute information to citizens about the control efforts. Information about the product(s) being used and where additional information (e.g., on health effects, environmental issues and degradation processes) can be obtained goes a long way in preventing complaints. Citizens may also be encouraged to control mosquitoes around their individual properties to increase the overall effectiveness of the abatement program. Habitat modification and sanitation are two of the most effective means of controlling mosquitoes.

- ♦ **The contract should detail how compliance with regulatory agency procedures will be addressed.**

Because the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) also regulates individuals who work for governmental agencies that apply pesticides for mosquito abatement, the political subdivision (city, county, school district) has to ensure that their employees have the correct licenses.

Records of all applications must be kept for 2 years after the application has been completed. If a contractor performs the work, the contract should state who within the governmental entity will receive a copy of this record. If a government

employee performs the application, that person is responsible for maintaining the record(s). A pest control business cannot allow government employees to spray under their licenses. Should a company be willing to allow such activities, check them off your list. Liability for public health incidents and fines from regulatory agencies can be costly.

### **For more information**

Contact the Texas Cooperative Extension Agricultural and Environmental Safety Unit for information on applicator licensing, study materials and training courses at (979) 845-3849. To register for SPCB examinations, call (512) 305-8250.

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