

## WEBSITE INFO

### COCKROACH CONTROL (VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM)

#### General Information

We need your help. Working together, we can control the cockroach population. The information below will assist you in keeping roaches out of your home.

Cockroaches are very adaptable and cannot be totally eradicated. In fact, they are important ecologically. Roaches consume decaying organic material, which reduces the volume, so they play a vital role in nature. That having been said, we all want to keep roaches in the great outdoors and not in our homes.

There are many varieties, but the ones listed below are major types found in the Metro Tucson area.

**American** – Often 1½ to 2” long (sometimes larger), reddish-brown, lives outdoors or in sewer systems, but will seek indoor locations during extreme heat and rain events (monsoon season). These roaches are also called water bugs, Palmetto bugs and sewer roaches. This is the only variety in the area that will inhabit sewers, and the only type that Conveyance treats the system for.



*American cockroaches (D. H. Gouge)*

**German** – Usually ½ to 5/8” long, light to medium brown, prefers to live indoors, seeks moisture, and is most active at night.



*German cockroach (J. Jackman)*

**Turkestan** – Approximately ½ to ¾” long, dark brown to black females, brownish-yellow males, prefers outdoors, but is attracted to lights.



*Turkestan cockroaches (D. H. Gouge)*

**Brown-Banded** – Measures ½” long, dark brown bands on light brown background, prefers indoors and low humidity.

**Desert** – Normally ¾” long, light brown to tan males are nocturnal and attracted to lights, but prefer outdoors. Females are ½” long, dark brown, prefer the outdoors and burrow into soft soil (very beneficial to the desert environment).

### **Vector Control Information**

The RWRD Conveyance Division operates the Vector Control Program. RWRD is the only utility in Pima County that treats for cockroaches. Further, most wastewater service providers in the U.S. do not proactively treat their systems as we do. This is a service that RWRD provides to their customers.

The Conveyance Division engages an outside contractor to treat manholes. We endeavor to treat each manhole once every two years (the amount of time the treatment is designed to last).

Manholes are sprayed with an insecticide mixed into a latex paint. This product is spray-painted on the circumference inside the entire manhole. Roaches will have to walk across this to leave a manhole. The product does not kill on contact, so after treatment you may see dead or dying roaches anywhere from around the manhole cover to the curb line, and sometimes beyond. You may notice heightened activity after treatment, as roaches are looking to escape the poison.

### **Placing A Call For Service**

It is suggested you follow **\*\*Good Test\*\*** recommendation under *Barriers* below. If the cockroach problem you are experiencing is not due to a manhole cause, treating the manhole will not solve your problem.

Before you place a call, please have the following information ready:

- Full Address, as in 1234 West Main St. This will allow a customer service representative to check the status of the manhole closest to your reported address, and provide you with this valuable information.

- Your Name. When we return your call, especially if you leave a work phone number, we want to be sure we speak with the right person.
- A phone number for home and/or work.

Call (520) 724-3401 to reach our roach line automated voice messaging system. Please speak clearly and slowly when you record your name, address and phone number. This is a dedicated line for roach calls only; we cannot service requests for other issues (billing, discontinuing service, etc.) as we do not have access to your records.

### **FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)**

**These are real questions from actual customers! Please check these out as the answers to your questions may be here.**

#### ***Will you come out and spray once I call?***

The technician will make an inspection of the manhole and will spray if he deems it necessary. Our technicians are highly experienced and have the skills to determine this. If the insecticide is potent and active, re-spray will not create a higher result. Additionally, EPA regulations must be followed regarding frequency of application.

#### ***How quickly will you come out to inspect my manhole?***

Response time varies tremendously depending on season, number of calls received, available personnel and budgetary constraints. During protracted hot spells, calls for service can exceed 20 per day for weeks, which can cause delay in inspections. That's why it is important to do what you can to help control the roach population.

#### ***How will I know if the technician came out and what he did?***

Our technician will leave a handout at your door with details describing the service he performed.

#### ***Do you spray every manhole?***

Not all manholes are accessible, and some are not owned by PCRWRD. If our manhole is located on private property to which we are denied entry, or buried in a customer's landscaping/vegetation, that manhole may not receive treatment. Some sewer systems are privately owned and can include: resort areas, trailer courts, condo/town home/apartment complexes, and gated communities. In these cases, you need to speak with the property owner/manager or HOA rep.

#### ***How do I know if my property is on a private system?***

If you call to report roaches, a customer service representative will inform you if you are on a private system.

#### ***After it rains, don't you need to spray again?***

No. The product is a latex paint designed to last for two years.

***Why don't you just fumigate the sewers?***

There is no practical way to fumigate, and this could also negatively impact dwellings and businesses. The current treatment plan is both safe and feasible.

***I heard you'll come out and treat my drains/spray my house, right?***

We do not treat private property. We only spray PCRWRD manholes.

***Don't all the roaches live in the sewers?***

No, only the variety known as the American Cockroach spends time in sewers or manholes, and also lives in other places. They are scavengers and move about.

***I saw roaches coming out of the drain/in the sink, so they had to come from the drain.***

Not necessarily. Sometimes they enter your home another way, but they seek moisture in sinks, showers, tubs, or floor drains. The first time you notice roaches they are surfacing from a drain or crawling in a sink, but they were already there.

***Why does it seem the roach problem is worse in the summer?***

Many roaches are most active at 84°F or higher. If temperatures rise in the spring and remain elevated through early fall, roach activity remains high. Heavy monsoon rains can often scour insects from the system. If we have a hot, dry summer, roach activity will be far greater than a cool, wet summer. Additionally mild winters can generate larger populations for the following summer. Therefore, some summers are worse than others due to these factors.

***We didn't have roaches where I came from/why is it worse in Arizona than where I came from?***

Roaches are found virtually everywhere, but you may not have been aware of them where you formerly lived. Northern climates often have killing frosts in the winter, which helps to control the population.

***The road/sidewalk is being dug up/my neighbors are redoing their landscaping/neighbors planted new trees and we seem to have roaches everywhere.***

Any activity that turns soil can disrupt underground creatures. Therefore, you will see more insects until they find a new place to settle in.

***Our neighbor's house isn't being cared for while they're away/our neighbors have trash on their property/our neighbors are dirty and that's bringing roaches. Can you talk to them?***

PCRWRD only treats manholes. Health and property concerns need to be addressed with other government agencies.

## **PREVENTION METHODS**

### **Barriers**

- Maintain fluid in p-traps (you can see the p-shaped pipe under a sink). Add water at least once a week during hot temperatures; running the tap for a few seconds should be enough. Household bleach can be used and may evaporate less slowly than water for those drains not often used.
- Close drains when not in use, especially for those fixtures not often used or if the home will be uninhabited for a time. This includes sinks, showers, tubs, and floor drains. Alternatively you can use wire mesh baskets in drains. Cover overflow holes with tape until infestation is under control, but be mindful not to overfill sinks or tubs. This is a good practice when away on vacation or when the home will be closed-up for a time. If a shower or floor drain has no closing mechanism, a simple solution is to place a plastic bucket with a weight inside (bottle of shampoo for instance) over the drain.
- **\*\*Good Test\*\*** Seal all drains as described above in the evening. If you find roaches the next morning, they are probably coming in another way than through the sewer system.
- Ensure that the cap on your clean-out is fitted securely.
- Check for any gaps around the home and garage/carport, especially windows, doors and pet entrances, as the thickness of a coin is enough for roaches to enter through. If you can see sunlight shining around door edges, that may be enough space for insects to enter. Check door sweeps or add them to ensure there are no gaps at the threshold. Don't forget security/screen doors. Seal cracks/gaps around pipes, wires, vents, fireplaces, ductwork, coolers and AC units.
- Don't leave doors or windows open (including garage doors and chimney dampers) as it takes seconds for insects to enter, especially at night as they may be attracted to lights. Be careful of leaving doors open near food prep areas or dumpsters.
- Repair broken windows and screens.
- Check your exhaust/intake vents and pipes on the roof or gable ends. If they don't have screen coverings, apply a galvanized mesh of ¼" or less. If you have vents under your eaves (often 2" rounds called bird holes), make sure the screening is intact.

### **Interior Care**

- Don't pour grease down the drain. In addition to creating system clogs, it is food for roaches. You don't want to lure them into your home!

- Limit use of the garbage disposal; again it provides a food source.
- Avoid leaving dirty dishes in the sink, especially overnight.
- Keep food in the refrigerator or in containers with tight lids.
- Don't leave pet food out overnight.
- Be careful of bringing boxes into your home that once held produce, or were left outdoors or in storage for a time. Hitchhikers can hide in crevices.

### **Exterior Care**

- Clear any debris, especially rotting organic material (gardening debris, palm frond piles, grass clippings, brush piles). Remove debris and/or vegetation that touches house siding.
- Move woodpiles a good distance from your home.
- Maintain open compost heaps a distance away, or consider a closed system.
- Garbage should be securely bagged in a tightly closed container. Rinse well all recyclables. Empty/remove bins/pails on a regular basis to keep pests from establishing themselves.
- Use yellow light bulbs that don't attract insects, especially in the summer.

### **Elimination of Water Sources**

Like all desert creatures, cockroaches are attracted to and need water. Follow these simple guidelines to minimize water exposure:

- Repair any indoor leaks, and be sure gaps around pipes are sealed.
- Fix any outdoor leaks at faucets and irrigation systems.
- Check gutters, leaders, downspouts and roof drains to be sure water flows freely away from your home. Clear any debris that impedes flow. Pooling water attracts pests.
- Water features like pools, spas and fountains, along with pet bowls, bird baths and irrigation drips, can be attracting items.

### **Treatment Options**

Treatment options to consider include traps, baits, dusts, chinks, liquids and sprays. There is no "one size fits all" as situations vary.

- There are many pest control/exterminator businesses which would be happy to speak with you and suggest treatment options.
- If you wish to do it yourself, there are retailers who specialize in pest control products, and may offer guidance and advice specific to your problems.
- Off-the-shelf products that are ready to go can be found at hardware, home improvement, department and grocery stores. Read the labels until you find a product that fits your needs.

We cannot recommend a particular business or product. It is suggested you seek personal recommendations from relatives and friends, and use phone books and internet as resources to locate retailers, products or exterminators. You may also choose to do background checks for service providers, perhaps using a resource such as the BBB (Better Business Bureau).

If you decide to apply insecticide, read the label carefully and follow directions as to personal protective gear, application guidelines, and other precautions. It is suggested that you treat the perimeters of your house (foundation), garage or carport, paying special attention to doors and windows. You may also want to include storage/garden sheds, privacy wall perimeters, and sidewalk edges.