Keep Pharaoh’s Ants Away

This leaflet is designed to help you to identify and control pharaoh’s ant infestations.

**Identification**
It is necessary to establish what type of ants you are seeing, as different treatments are required for different types of ants.

How large are the ants you are seeing? Most pharaoh’s ants are much smaller than garden ants.

What colour are they? Pharaoh’s ants are a different colour from garden ants. Whereas garden ants are black/brown, pharaoh’s ants tend to be a red/light brown colour.

Are you seeing them outside? In most circumstances, pharaoh ants will only be found indoors.

Are they a health hazard? Pharaoh’s ants can be a risk to public health. They are very fond of water and sometimes have to travel to drains or waste food collection areas to obtain a supply. Because of this, they are potential vectors of disease and can, in certain circumstances, be capable of transmitting ‘food poisoning’ illnesses. However, in most cases, where pharaoh’s ants have entered a block of flats, with a plentiful water supply, they are less likely to visit drain areas etc, and are therefore, less likely to be a risk to health.

**Behaviour**
Most pharaoh’s ant problems occur in blocks of flats. These areas are favoured by pharaoh’s ants because of their communal central heating systems and the availability of food. They can gain access to all areas within properties, due to their small size. It is virtually impossible to prevent them from entering a property.

A new colony can be formed very easily; it only takes a few ants, at each stage of the life cycle, to ‘bud-off’ and a new area will be infested.

**Hygiene**
Please make sure that:
- Kitchen surfaces are washed before and after preparing food. Hot soapy water is sufficient for this task.
- Spillages of liquid and food are cleaned up as soon as possible.
- All loose food is stored in secure containers.
- Food cupboards are cleaned regularly.
- Food stored on kitchen units is covered.
- Cooker tops and interiors, microwave ovens are cleaned regularly.
- All food rubbish is placed in a lined bin and emptied into an outside bin as soon as possible.

Hygiene advice is given because it is the only way to ensure effective treatment. Failure to do so could result in continued infestation which may spread to other adjoining properties.

**Treatment**
One treatment normally used for Pharaoh’s Ants is a food bait insecticide or ‘bait station’. They are baits that the ants treat as food and take back to their nest. The bait is then passed around the other ants in the nest. The aim is to kill the queen ant(s) and destroy the nest.

It is important not to use insecticide sprays or ‘ant powder’ with pharaoh
ants, as this can make problems worse. Sprays kill the foraging (food seeking) ants before they can get the bait back to the nest. In some cases, where sprays have been used, the nest splits or ‘buds-off’ to form a new nest in another part of the property.