EXTERMINATOR — GUIDE

How to choose an exterminator

Check the licence, compare written scopes and ask how the company will measure results.

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Begin with the problem, not the package name. Tell each company what you saw, where you saw it and what has already been tried. Ask whether an inspection is needed before a quote. Keep uncertain observations separate from confirmed pest identification.

Check credentials directly

EPA's hiring guidance recommends checking qualifications and the relevant service category. Ask for the legal business name, licence number, agency and the person responsible for your job. Use the authority for your property's state or province to check the current record.

Ask about insurance and request the actual evidence if it matters to your decision. Trade membership and a directory badge do not replace the relevant licence check. Do not infer technical competence from a paid listing position.

Compare written scopes

Send the same description to each company. Ask each to state the pest, inspection findings, treatment area, method, preparation, exclusions and follow-up. Ask what property access is needed and what happens if an area is not accessible.

For a recurring plan, separate payment frequency from service frequency. For a one-off job, ask which return visits are included. For rodent or wildlife work, ask whether entry point repair and cleanup are separate.

EPA recommends comparing competence and value rather than selecting by price alone. A shorter quote is not necessarily a smaller job. Ask the company to explain missing items before comparing totals.

Ask about products and decisions

Ask what would trigger treatment and how the company will monitor results. EPA's IPM guidance uses monitoring and prevention to guide control decisions. Ask why the proposed method fits the evidence.

If a pesticide is proposed, ask for its label and written preparation and re-entry directions. Tell the company about people, pets and site conditions that could affect the plan. Do not accept a general claim that a product is harmless as a substitute for directions.

Keep the agreement

Before paying, keep the quote, licence check, preparation sheet and service terms. Ask about

cancellation, renewal and the exact meaning of any guarantee. Ask who will respond if activity continues.

Choose a company that answers these questions clearly. If a licence record or treatment instruction remains unclear, resolve it with the company or authority before work begins.

Sources

All sources below were fetched and checked on 2026-11-10. Dates are access dates.

- US EPA, Tips for Selecting a Pest Control Service. Accessed 2026-11-10.
- US EPA, Integrated Pest Management Principles. Accessed 2026-11-10.
- US EPA, Introduction to Pesticide Labels. Accessed 2026-11-10.

Frequently asked questions

Does this guide replace a local inspection?

No. Confirm the pest, current licence and treatment scope with the company and relevant authority.