

Where are they coming from?

Cockroaches are natural to most environments and often live in close association with human activity. Cockroaches like dark, damp environments and constantly seek out water sources and decaying organic matter to feed on. As a result, they may be found in homes and all manner of building structures, landscaping, piping, parks and natural spaces. One of the things that makes them so successful is that they are incredibly adaptable and mobile, always seeking out new environments where they can thrive.

Why do they like sewers?

Cockroaches are drawn to damp, dark spaces, including crawl spaces, storm drains, floor drains, and all types of pipes. Sewer pipes can offer both a source of water and decaying organic matter, so as cockroaches move about, they may try to invade sewer pipes in search of the most ideal habitat. In drier conditions—like Sacramento summers—these pests seek water sources and shelter.

What is SacSewer doing when cockroaches are found in sewers?

When a customer calls with a concern about cockroaches in the sewer system, we'll come out to investigate. If our investigation confirms cockroach activity in our sewer pipes, pest control treatment of our pipes will be scheduled using qualified pest control specialists. [See reverse for more information.](#)

Can cockroaches get from sewer pipes into my home or business?

If your P-traps and indoor plumbing are well maintained and regularly utilized, it is highly unlikely that cockroaches will enter your home through sewer pipes. Floor drains may provide access to cockroaches if left unused for some time. To prevent this, floor drains should be flushed every week or so to recharge the trap, or the drains can be outfitted with closable lids or rubber stoppers. More commonly, cockroaches tend to enter the property along the outside of plumbing, so make sure to seal any holes around pipes wherever they enter structures.



Are there different kinds of cockroaches? If so, what kind is impacting the sewers?

There are an incredible number of cockroach species. In our area, while the American cockroach is commonly found to invade sewers, storm drains, and other piping systems, local pest control companies also report finding Oriental, German, and Turkestan cockroach species.

RESOURCES

- **University of California Cooperative Extension – Sacramento Office:** (916) 875-6913. A community resource providing advice and information related to pest problems
- **University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program:** ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7467.html
- **Cockroach Identification Guide:** cockroachfacts.com/types-of-roaches-with-pictures

The Sacramento Area Sewer District (SacSewer) owns and operates 4,600 miles of sewer pipelines, including 67,000 sewer manholes. Many dark and damp environments, including landscaping, storm drains, crawl spaces, and sewer systems, can attract cockroaches. Over the years, SacSewer has used several cockroach control methods to address customer concerns and discourage cockroaches from inhabiting the sewer system.

What is SacSewer doing to control cockroaches?

When a customer calls with a concern about cockroaches in the sewer system, we send someone out to investigate. If our investigation confirms cockroach activity, SacSewer uses a number of proactive and reactive measures including:

- **Fogging and Baiting:** SacSewer works with qualified pest control specialists to perform a pest control treatment where an insecticide fog is released that instantly kills cockroaches in the manhole, and bait is left behind to kill other roaches. After the treatment, we monitor for effectiveness and re-treat when necessary.
- **Boric Acid Treatment:** SacSewer also places boric acid tablets inside the manholes to bait and kill cockroaches. Once applied, the tablets last through an entire breeding season.
- **Preventative Maintenance Program:** In locations where SacSewer's sewer pipes have a repeat history of cockroach activity, SacSewer performs ongoing inspections, treatment, and cleanings to further address the issue.

Are these cockroach control methods safe?

Yes. SacSewer's mission is to protect public health and the environment. As part of that commitment, SacSewer has worked with the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District and others to ensure all eradication methods meet local, state, and federal requirements for the protection of public health.

What if I see cockroaches after SacSewer has already come out?

- *After fogging, baiting, and boric acid treatment:* It may take some time for the treatment to work, but these control methods are continuous and should be effective for about five to six months. If customers see cockroaches again after six months, they can call SacSewer at 916-875-6730 to come back out.
- *SacSewer does not address cockroach issues on private property.* If you see cockroaches on your property or in your home, please consider performing pest control treatment or contacting a pest management company, just as you might do for any other property-invading pest like ants, wasps, termites, or ticks.

How can customers help control cockroaches?

You can help by eliminating potential food, water, and shelter sources that attract cockroaches, while also sealing cracks and crevices around your home. Follow these tips to reduce cockroaches on your property:

- Seal cracks or other openings in exterior walls and foundation
- Pick up pet food between feedings
- Remove trash daily from home and keep lids closed on outdoor cans
- Create a rock barrier between mulch or soil and foundation