



Can your pest control business run without you?

A 90-day test

2027 edition 11-minute read

By Simon Read, Founder & Managing Director

A practical guide with a pest control owner cover log

Images are illustrative.

The whole guide on one page

Start with the decisions that come back to you. Then establish who can take them, what evidence they need and when they must ask for help.

The issue	What good looks like	Ask for
1. Record the work behind your diary	Owner tasks visible alongside site work	A dated task and interruption log
2. Put cover into the route plan	Travel, access and reporting time included	Routes matched to customer instructions
3. Check competence before delegation	The proposed person fits the actual activity	Certificates, applicable CPD and practitioner review
4. Give each finding an owner	Unresolved reports have a named next action	Visit record, review and escalation trail
5. Test the customer and cash handover	Someone can answer the customer and trace payment	Agreement, complaint, invoice and receipt
6. Cost the cover and review the test	Replacement duties and unresolved gaps stay visible	Cost evidence and the completed weekly log

Use the two-page log on pages 10 and 11 each week. Keep necessary supervision in place throughout.

Bring the dependency you cannot resolve

Bring your completed log to a free first conversation.

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Talk about your owner cover

1. Record the work behind your diary

A diary shows visits. It may leave out the customer call, route change and report review that made each visit possible. Record those decisions as they happen.

What good looks like

Match each interruption to a task, a decision and the record needed to resolve it. That is your evidence test.

Ternmead Pest Control

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Ternmead is invented and its figures are illustrative. Its owner plans 40 hours a week: 20 administration and finance, 12 customer review and quoting, and 8 scheduling and escalations.

Capture	Include	Evidence of cover
Before a visit	Access, instructions and route changes	Another person can find the current plan
After a visit	Report review and unresolved findings	An assigned reviewer records the next action
Between visits	Quotes, purchases and collections	The decision and authority are recorded

What the buyer is thinking

Show which decisions came back to you during ordinary work. A quiet telephone means little if you completed the difficult tasks beforehand.

What to check

- ☐ Log work you did remotely as well as at the office.
- ☐ Record why the substitute needed help, including missing access or instructions.

Ninety days is this guide's chosen exercise, not a market standard or a promise of independence. Set dates and review the log weekly.

2. Put cover into the route plan

A substitute needs time to reach the site, gain access, do the work and finish the record. Compare the route plan with what actually happened.

What good looks like

Trace a planned food-site visit through access instructions, travel, attendance and the completed report. Explain any difference.

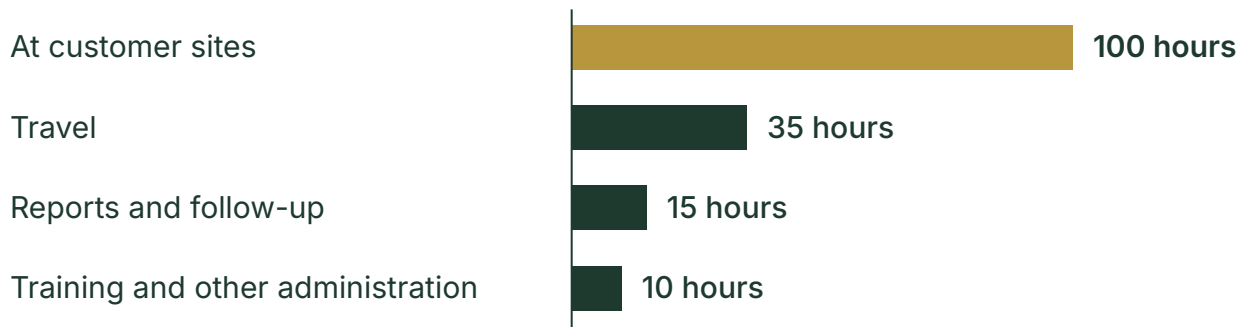
Ternmead's planning week

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Four technicians each have 40 planned hours. The total is 160 hours, including time away from customer sites.

Ternmead's 160 planned technician hours

Illustrative



$100 + 35 + 15 + 10 = 160$ hours across four technicians.

What the buyer is thinking

Show me who re-plans the food-site visit when access changes and a seasonal call-out arrives. Explain which commitment takes priority and who approves that decision.

What to check

- ☐ Compare scheduled servicing with one domestic call-out and one seasonal job.
- ☐ Record displaced work, extra travel and the person told about any change.
- ☐ Check the substitute has access to the current customer instructions.

These are chosen capacity figures, not a productivity target. Keep actual hours and unresolved coverage gaps beside the plan.

3. Check competence before delegation

Being available is only the first question. Ask a competent practitioner whether the proposed cover fits the actual pest-management activity.

What good looks like

For professional-use rodenticides, check the person's evidence against CRRU's detailed UK requirements [1].

From January 2026, these accept approved certification within the previous five years, or older approved certification with current approved CPD membership. First-time CPD entrants must complete the current year's criteria to be ready for the next year [1].

Ternmead's cover question

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Its four-technician plan does not identify who holds which credentials. The proposed substitute remains a question until the actual evidence and work have been reviewed.

Keep separate	Ask for
Individual competence	Certificate, date and applicable approved CPD evidence
Actual activity	Practitioner review of the task and product conditions
Company membership	Written confirmation from the relevant issuer about continuity

What the buyer is thinking

I need to understand which activities have suitable cover. A name on the rota does not answer that question.

What to check

- ☐ Keep necessary supervision and escalation available during the test.
- ☐ Check certificate age at the date the evidence will be relied on.

These are existing requirements to check for 2027 continuity, not a new 2027 deadline. Do not use the exercise to leave a site without suitable cover.

4. Give each finding an owner

The visit is not the end of the task if a finding still needs review. Follow one report until the next action is accepted and recorded.

What good looks like

HSE describes integrated pest management and a stewardship framework including training, certification and auditing [2]. Use that context to examine how your own findings are reviewed.

Ternmead's report time

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Its technician plan includes 15 hours for reports and follow-up. That allocation does not prove that another person can review a difficult finding when the owner is absent.

Follow the record

Question to settle

Site finding	What did the technician observe and record?
Review	Who can assess the unresolved issue within their competence?
Customer action	Who tells the customer what needs attention?
Escalation	Who takes responsibility if the matter remains unresolved?

What the buyer is thinking

Show me the review trail, including any return to the owner. I need to distinguish a completed visit from a completed follow-up.

What to check

- ☐ Retain the actual report and the reviewer's next action.
- ☐ Record interruptions for technical judgement separately from missing paperwork.

This is a documentary test, not a universal statutory records list or treatment instruction. Ask the practitioner which records apply to the work in front of them.

5. Test the customer and cash handover

Choose a food-premises agreement and follow the customer conversation through to the service record, invoice and receipt. Include a complaint or an unanswered question if one exists.

What good looks like

FSA MyHACCP guidance says contracted services should meet the food business's requirements [3]. Compare the customer's actual instructions with the records your substitute can find.

Ternmead's customer mix

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Annual income includes £300,000 food-premises servicing and £220,000 other commercial servicing. Only £140,000 of that other commercial income has current signed terms; the remaining £80,000 is repeat custom.

Owner task

Ask the substitute to trace

Customer review	Current scope, contact, access and unresolved action
Complaint	Who can respond, what was agreed and what remains open
Collection	Invoice, query, receipt and any outstanding balance
Stock purchase	Required item, authorisation and the responsible reviewer

What the buyer is thinking

Can the customer get an informed answer without your private notes?
Show where authority stops and who takes over.

What to check

- ☐ Match the agreed service to the report and invoice.
- ☐ Record what the substitute could not resolve and why.

The FSA point is guidance for food businesses, not a compulsory visit frequency or a new legal duty on the contractor. Let the actual agreement define the service being tested.

6. Cost the cover and review the test

The job still needs doing after the owner leaves. Link the proposed cost to the duties, available time and competence needed to cover it.

What good looks like

Reconcile the replacement role to the task log and cost evidence. Keep unresolved duties visible instead of assuming a replacement can do everything.

Ternmead's profit bridge

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Reported operating profit is £120,000. Add back its chosen £10,000 isolated expense and £50,000 owner employment cost, then deduct £65,000 replacement employment cost. Adjusted profit is £115,000.

Review point

Documentary test

Work transferred	Match the task to a named substitute and completion record
Help still needed	Keep each owner intervention and its cause
Cover cost	Match duties and hours to actual employment or supplier evidence
End of the exercise	List unresolved tasks, responsible people and next review dates

What the buyer is thinking

Show what the replacement cost covers. If the owner still handles technical escalations, tell me how that remaining work will be covered and costed.

What to check

- ☐ Review weekly, then compare the first and final logs.
- ☐ Keep outstanding gaps open until there is evidence to close them.

The £65,000 is a chosen total employment cost, not a wage benchmark or a quote. The exercise does not establish a sale price or price uplift.

What a small-team handover can tell you

One acquirer's announcement describes a West Sussex family pest-control business whose owners had decided to retire. It said one owner would remain as a technician consultant during the transition [4].

The target's filed accounts record an average of five persons employed during the year ended June 2021 [5]. This is a small-team ownership example. The measure is the historical annual average for the target company, not five technicians, full-time equivalents or acquisition-day staffing.

Public evidence

Question for your own handover

An owner was to remain during transition [4]

Which duties need continued owner involvement?

A historical average of five persons employed [5]

What does your own staffing record actually measure?

The announcement describes the intended role [4]

Where will scope, availability and escalation be written down?

The announcement does not establish the exact completion date, a successful handover, price or comparable financial results. It cannot prove that Ternmead or your business would sell on similar terms.

What to check

☐ Describe any proposed transition work as specific duties, not simply help when needed.

☐ Take unresolved obligations and contract wording to your solicitor.

Pest control owner cover log

Use both sheets together for one week. Enter the business and week below. Record the actual task, required competence evidence and substitute before testing cover. Keep necessary supervision available.

Business and week beginning

Task reference	Actual task and site	Competence evidence needed	Substitute and escalation contact
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			

Supervision to retain, customer access and instructions to confirm before starting

Use the same task labels on the second sheet. Add a separate pair of sheets when you need more entries. There is no pass mark.

Type your answers in and save a copy, or print the page and fill it in by hand. Nothing you enter is sent to us.

Owner cover log: interruptions and follow-up

Enter the same business and week as on the first sheet. Record owner help, the actual outcome and the person and date for the next action. An interruption is evidence, not a failed employee.

Business and week beginning

Task reference	Owner interruption and reason	Outcome and evidence	Next action, person and date
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			

Weekly review: unresolved owner duties, proposed cover or cost evidence, and next review date

At each weekly review, carry unresolved tasks forward. At the end of your chosen 90-day exercise, list what still needs owner involvement and the cover or advice required.

Type your answers in and save a copy, or print the page and fill it in by hand. Nothing you enter is sent to us.

Sources and validity

1. Campaign for Responsible Rodenticide Use UK: Training and Certification, publication date not displayed. UK stewardship rules from January 2026. Detailed requirements and FAQs support the two certification routes and first-time CPD timing. CPD membership alone does not replace the approved qualification in the older-certificate route.
2. Health and Safety Executive: Rodenticides, updated Jun 2025. GB and Northern Ireland have distinct biocides regimes. The UK stewardship framework for professional anticoagulant use supports the review context; it does not establish a universal records list, retention period, product permission or company-membership transfer rule.
3. Food Standards Agency, MyHACCP: General requirements to be considered for each prerequisite, publication date not displayed. Food-business guidance, especially Contract services and Pest Control. No statutory contractor duty, fixed visit frequency or certification clause is inferred.
4. Cleankill Pest Control: Cleankill increases foothold in West Sussex, publication date not displayed. Acquisition announcement concerning Des Bone Ltd in West Sussex. Ann and Richard Bone had decided to retire; Richard was to remain as a technician consultant during transition. Exact completion date and financial terms are not disclosed.
5. Des Bone Ltd: Accounts for the year ended June 2021, note 4, PDF page 8. Filed March 2022; approved December 2021. Average persons employed during that year: five. This is target-company historical employment evidence, not current or completion-day technician capacity.

Checked Oct 2026. We review every guide after the Autumn Budget in October 2026. Technical, employment and transaction questions need the appropriate professional's review against the actual work and documents.

The example. Ternmead Pest Control is invented, based in England for this illustration, and is not a Reads client or a real sale. Its figures and 90-day exercise are chosen teaching inputs, not sector benchmarks. £120,000 + £10,000 + £50,000 less £65,000 = £115,000 adjusted profit. No value, contractual price, working-capital adjustment or seller-cash calculation follows from the test. The images are illustrative.

Bring the task that still comes back to you



Bring your owner cover log to a free first conversation. Start with the unresolved decision, the person who could cover it and the evidence still missing.

There is no obligation to go further.

Simon Read
Founder & Managing Director

01285 704466

enquiries@pestcontrolbusinessforsale.co.uk
pestcontrolbusinessforsale.co.uk



Prepared by Simon Read | Reads Advice Partners Ltd | pestcontrolbusinessforsale.co.uk
The Alliston Centre, Stroud Rd, Cirencester GL7 6JR
01285 704466
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