

Pest Controller interview questions

careertips.com.au: common questions and what they're really testing

What to expect

Interviews for pest controller roles typically blend practical, technical and client-facing questions. Employers want to see that you can identify pests, apply treatments safely and communicate clearly with clients.

- **Process:** How you conduct an inspection or treatment, step by step.
- **Technical:** Identifying pests, choosing treatments and using tools like Termatrac or thermal imaging.
- **Safety:** Handling chemicals, managing risks and complying with WHS and licensing rules.
- **Behavioural:** Past experiences with difficult clients, urgent callouts or team conflicts.
- **Scenario:** Judging a situation on site, such as discovering termites in a food premises.
- **Client-facing:** Explaining treatment plans and prevention advice to homeowners or business managers.

Usually a phone screen, then a face-to-face or on-site interview with a supervisor. You might be asked to walk through a mock inspection or discuss a recent job. Expect a mix of technical questions and behavioural ones.

1. Walk me through how you conduct a standard pest inspection for a residential property.

Why they ask

To assess your process, thoroughness and ability to identify issues before treating.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: start with preparation, then move through internal and external areas, and finish with documentation and recommendations.

Example answer

"First, I review any previous service history and ask the client about what they have noticed. I then inspect externally, checking the perimeter, roof void, subfloor and garden areas for signs of pests, entry points or conducive conditions. Inside, I check kitchens, bathrooms, laundry and storage areas for droppings, damage or live activity. I use a torch and sometimes Termatrac or a thermal imaging camera to confirm termite activity. I record all findings and discuss a treatment plan with the client, including prevention advice."

2. Tell me about a time you had to deal with a difficult client who disagreed with your treatment recommendation.

Why they ask

To see how you handle conflict, educate clients and maintain professionalism.

How to structure your answer

STAR: describe the situation, the task, the action you took and the result.

Example answer

"A homeowner wanted an immediate spray for ants in the kitchen, but I had identified a moisture problem behind the dishwasher that was attracting them. I listened to their concerns, explained why treating the source would be more effective, and offered a plan that included fixing the moisture issue and using a targeted bait. They agreed, and the ants were resolved without repeated callbacks. The client later referred me to a neighbour."

3. You are treating a restaurant and you notice signs of cockroaches in the kitchen. What do you do?

Why they ask

To test your judgement under pressure and your understanding of food safety and client communication.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: prioritise safety, inform the right people, document, treat according to regulations, and advise on follow-up.

Example answer

"I would stop and assess the extent of the activity without disturbing food preparation. I would inform the manager immediately, explaining that cockroaches in a kitchen are a food safety risk. I would document what I found, then apply a gel bait or appropriate treatment in cracks and crevices away from food surfaces. I would advise the manager on cleaning and exclusion measures and schedule a follow-up inspection to confirm control."

4. How would you identify and treat a termite infestation in a timber-framed home?

Why they ask

To assess your technical knowledge of termite management and compliance with standards.

How to structure your answer

Technical explanation: describe detection methods, confirm species, then outline treatment options and standards.

Example answer

"I would start with a thorough inspection using a Termatrac radar and thermal imaging camera to detect termite activity without disturbing them. I would look for mud tubes, damaged timber and evidence of moisture. Once I confirm live termites, I would identify the species and choose a treatment such as a chemical barrier, baiting system or physical barrier, following AS 3660. I would also recommend addressing any moisture issues and schedule monitoring to ensure the colony is eliminated."

5. What steps do you take to handle and apply pesticides safely?

Why they ask

To confirm you know WHS requirements, chemical handling rules and safe work practices.

How to structure your answer

Risk assessment and compliance: list the steps you take before, during and after application.

Example answer

"Before applying any pesticide, I read the safety data sheet and product label, check the application equipment, and put on the required PPE. I secure the area, ensure no people or pets are nearby, and apply the product at the correct rate and method. Afterward, I clean the equipment, store chemicals correctly, and dispose of containers as per regulations. I record the treatment and any safety incidents."

6. How do you explain prevention measures to a client who wants a one-off treatment?

Why they ask

To see if you can educate clients and build value beyond a single service.

How to structure your answer

Education and empathy: acknowledge their request, explain the benefits of prevention, and give practical, simple advice.

Example answer

"I would start by acknowledging that they want a quick fix and that the treatment will address the current issue. Then I would explain that pests often return if underlying conditions like food, water or entry points remain. I would give them a few simple steps, such as sealing gaps, fixing leaks and keeping food stored properly. I would offer a follow-up inspection and leave a written summary so they can decide. Most clients appreciate understanding why ongoing management saves them hassle."