

The absolutely shocking evidence of a mouse infestation in a Salford convenience store

The shop's written cleaning schedule was a blank piece of paper

BY

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Nibbled Kit Kats, chewed bags of crisps and sandwiches 26 days out of date were found on sale at a Salford convenience store.

The culprits were an infestation of mice which put the public at risk of salmonella, a court heard.

An environmental health officer found mice had gnawed holes in packets of popcorn, peanuts and chocolate which were on sale to the public.



One packet had mouse droppings inside it and the packaging was so badly contaminated with mouse faeces and urine that anyone touching it could have been put at risk.



The store also had 10 packets of sandwiches still on sale which were 26 days past their use by date.

Atif Ashraf, 31, owner of Premier Pendleton Convenience Store, in Hankinson Way, Pendleton, pleaded guilty to six offences of failing to have adequate pest control procedures in place, failing to protect food against contamination likely to render it unfit for human consumption, failing to maintain or implement proper food safety procedures and displaying food beyond its use by date. The offences fall under The Food Safety and Hygiene Regulations.



He was fined £1,280, ordered to pay £1,027 in costs and a victim surcharge of £128.

The court heard that a member of the public reported seeing rodent droppings on packets of popcorn at the busy mini market on February 2nd this year.



Environmental health officers visited the same day and found the shelves in the shop were very heavily contaminated with fresh mouse droppings and strewn with popcorn which the mice had eaten. It was impossible to miss and clear that management were just ignoring the problem.

Large amounts of cardboard, which should have been removed to avoid the mice using it as nesting material, were also stored behind the shelves.



Records showed the mouse problem had been going on since July 2016 but the pest controller last visited the shop at the end of September, five months earlier.

Mr Ashraf was not recording daily food safety checks, had not updated staff training details clearly and the shop's written cleaning schedule was a blank document.



Mr Ashraf told the court the offences happened while he was away in Saudi Arabia and the manager of the shop was away. He said it should never have happened and his staff now do weekly checks.

Speaking after the case, Councillor David Lancaster, lead member for environment and community safety, said: “Mr Ashraf was given advice on pest control and compliance with regulations which are there to protect his customers and staff. He was responsible for making sure they were adhered to full stop.

“He is very lucky no-one became seriously ill through his negligence. I hope this serves as a warning to other business owners who may be tempted to skimp on cleaning and pest control.”