

## Guidance Document

# G0233 Control of Pests on the Underground

Issue No.: A2

Issue date: April 2012  
Review date: April 2017

MAYOR OF LONDON



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## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Guidance Document is to define the minimum requirements for the control and management of pests on London Underground (LU) property.
- 1.2 It assists designers, specifiers and maintainers to selection the most appropriate type of deterrent for pests. It is not to be read as the sole solution for pest control; each instance will require its own solution, and advice should be sought from a professional body.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 This guidance applies to all new and replacement pest control systems installed on and about the track, as well as within stations, depots and ancillary buildings, including disused buildings, structures and other operational land, where London Underground (LU), or its suppliers and/or partners, are responsible for the installation and maintenance of pest control systems.
- 2.2 This guidance gives advice on the legal position regarding pests control and the types and use of certain deterrents.
- 2.3 This guidance should be read in conjunction with G1012 Ecology Guidance.

## 3 Guidance

### 3.1 Control of pest bird species

#### 3.1.1 Risks

LU has a duty of care to customers, staff, contractors and other third parties to maintain a safe, clean environment whilst using or working on its property. This includes the prevention of hazards caused by nesting and roosting of pest birds, most notably feral pigeons and seagulls. Fresh and/or dried bird guano build up can:

- create slip hazards on flooring
- affect persons with pre-existing respiratory conditions
- affect persons with pre-existing skin conditions
- cause foul odour
- attract insects
- cause damage to building fabric due to its acidic nature
- block building drainage and increase risk of flooding

#### 3.1.2 Legislation and Code of Practice

When controlling pest birds, LU must comply with:

- 1) **The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** states that it is illegal to kill or injure a wild bird or to interfere with a nesting bird, its eggs or nest. The exception to this rule is where the species is listed under the General Licences as a bird that can be taken (killed) and their nest removed by an 'Authorised Person'. The licence can only be acted upon in the circumstances where this person can be satisfied that all non-lethal methods of control will be likely to fail or are impractical and if legally challenged must be able to prove such is the case. Failure to comply with the Licence requirements will result in LU being liable to prosecution.
- 2) **The Animal Welfare Act 2006.** The Act relates to control necessary for building protection. The Act makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to animals (deliberate or unintentional), including culling activities as mentioned above. This

is relevant to the use of netting, where birds may become trapped in or behind the nets.

Both Acts are 'Common Enforcers' Acts, thus anyone can bring an action against LU when a breach of the terms and conditions of the Act has occurred.

- 3) **The Greater London Local Authorities' Code of Practice** for the control of nuisance birds is used as the vehicle for exercising their powers under Section 9 of the London Local Authorities Act 2004. This enables a London Local Authority to serve a bird proofing notice on a owner/occupier of a building or structure (including bridges) fronting upon, crossing or overhanging the highway where habitual nesting; roosting or alighting of birds is causing a nuisance to pedestrians using the highway.

### 3.1.4 Methods of Control

| Method of control            | Guidance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Prevention</b>            | Enclosure should be considered for bridges, or other structures, where there is sufficient headroom over the road below; room for safe access, and the structure has sufficient capacity to withstand the additional weight. Access for inspection; cleaning and maintenance purposes will still be required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Predators</b>             | <p>The use of falcons, hawks or other birds of prey is subject to General Licence WLF 1000088 (The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) Licence to kill or take certain birds to preserve public health or safety.</p> <p>They can be used successfully in railway depot buildings which are more enclosed, but are not recommended for open areas there is no way of preventing attacks on non-target birds.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Anti-perching devices</b> | <p>These are usually in the form of a 'mat' of spikes that prevent birds from landing. They are simple to install; attaching to most horizontal or vertical surfaces using a silicone gel which does not mark or damage the surface applied to, and can be easily removed should access to the area be required.</p> <p>They trap dust, debris and rubbish and are very visually intrusive and unsightly.</p> <p>Poor positioning will not prevent perching and may actually assist nesting.</p>                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Post and wire</b>         | <p>Post and wire describes a parallel series of horizontal wires which are threaded and spring-tensioned across vertical pins.</p> <p>Usually a poor performing method of bird control, although less obtrusive than other types. Vertical posts supporting the wires are not robust due to the small area of contact for fixing and easily collapse. Fixing to the substrate is by mechanical means which can cause damage to the building fabric during installation or after due to freeze/thaw action on poorly filled post holes. Poor positioning will not prevent perching.</p>                                                      |
| <b>Netting</b>               | <p>Netting is usually the most expensive and intrusive type of bird control system available. The suspension system of retaining wires used to install netting is highly invasive to the building fabric due to the number of fixing holes required.</p> <p>Where the netted area is extensive and access is still required to the areas and equipment behind it. Zips should be considered where frequent access for essential maintenance is necessary. Zips will also need to be cleaned and maintained regularly to ensure access is preserved.</p> <p>If access is required to equipment behind netting, the asset manager must be</p> |