

Three golden fleas are positioned around the central text box: one large flea in the top left, one in the top right, and one in the bottom left. The background is a light, textured grey.

State of the Flea Control

2025 | MARKET REPORT

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Flea Market Finds

While generally a bite-sized service, flea control has picked up in some areas – and the reasons why might surprise you.

It's a jumping, ankle-biting nuisance that most people don't tolerate all that well — especially when the beloved family dog is under an itchy-scratchy attack. Fleas bite. While this wingless parasite that typically measures 2 millimeters represents a speck of the pest control service marketplace relative to regulars like cockroaches and ants, a number of pest management professionals (PMPs) who participated in PCT's 2025 State of the Flea Control Market survey noticed a slight uptick in activity.

Louis Dorton owns South Plains Pest Control in Lubbock, Texas, where fleas start hopping in spring until a late-fall freeze. Prairie dogs,

possums and foxes carry cat fleas into residents' yards, especially those with humid, dark hangouts like low-lying brush. They reside under decks that critters access and beneath shade trees.

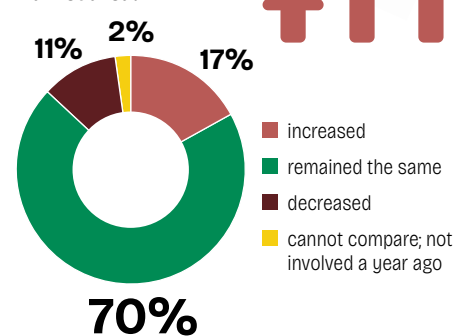
During flea season, Dorton estimates that 30% of his clients subscribe to a monthly flea control program that kicks off in March.

"People love their pets — and a lot of them like their pets even more than their in-laws — so it's not a hard sell," Dorton said. Pet owners represent about 75% of his calls for flea service.

PCT's flea research indicated a 17% increase in flea infestation incidences, with 70% reporting no change in activity and 11% noting

Rising and Steady Flea Activity

Over the past year, do you feel the incidence of flea infestations has increased, decreased or remained the same in your market area?



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 126

a decrease. Factors that turn up flea pressure include warm and wet weather, sandy soil, unkempt yards, lapses in veterinarian treatment (possibly due to budgetary issues), feral cats and other animal intruders that traipse through yards with these parasite hitchhikers.

Chickens can be a problem, too.

Luis Arroyo said his Lee, Fla., operation's flea service amounts to about 10% of annual revenue and it has grown during the last year. He's pointing a finger at homeowners who set up coops to cope with egg prices, not realizing that chicken feed attracts rats, which invite fleas to the scene.

"Their pets are running around the backyard and not on flea medication and backyard chickens draw in rats and raccoons," said Arroyo, owner of All Pro Pest Control. "Is it really worth it?"

There is also a greater incidence of flea pressure in the rental units he services.

Last year, PCT survey respondents generated an average 4.6% of overall revenue from flea control services. Most (69%) said flea control represented less gross income than this. Just 5% attribute managing fleas to 15% more of revenue.

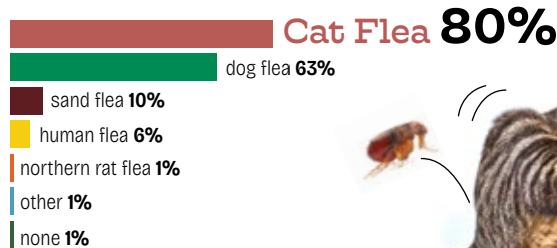
But much like bed bugs — a bigger chunk of the market — flea bites and an "ick" bad rap seems to trigger calls vs. a deal-with-it mentality. PMPs across the board say it's a small yet essential public health service.

Chet Miles has watched flea pressure creep up during the last few years, which he said is "a little surprising because of how good of a job veterinarians are doing with prescribing preventive medications." Even so, the owner of Driftwood, Texas-based Miles Pest Control estimates servicing no more than a half dozen clients with flea problems last year.

Meanwhile, David Bonett, owner of Capitol Exterminating in Brick, N.J., has been in the industry since 1975 and said flea calls are "not as common as they used to be," estimating the service represents about 10% of his revenue. But when there's a problem, "People don't let it go." ■

Raining Cats and Dogs!

What flea species are common in your market area?

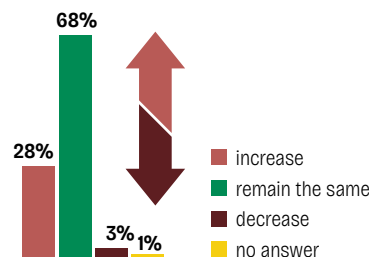


Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 126;
Respondents could choose multiple answers



\$ on the Up and Up

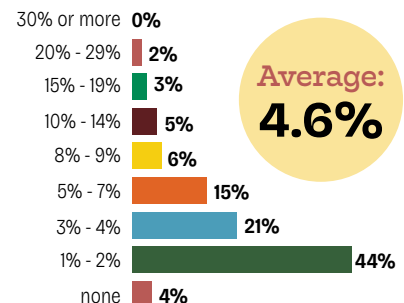
Compared with last year, do you anticipate the percentage of revenue generated from flea control at your service location to increase, decrease or remain the same in 2025?



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 126

Bite of Overall Business

What percentage of your service location's overall revenue was derived from flea control services in 2024?



Average:
4.6%

Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 126



ABOUT THE SURVEY

The PCT 2025 State of the Flea Control Market survey was sponsored by Central Life Sciences/Zoëcon and compiled by Readex Research, a privately held research firm in Stillwater, Minn. A sample of 4,990 pest control company owners, executives, technical directors and managers was systematically selected from the PCT database. Data was collected from 143 respondents – a 3 percent response rate – via online survey from March 5-31, 2025. The majority of results are based on the 126 respondents whose locations offer flea control services. The margin of error for percentages is plus or minus 8.7 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. Charts may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Open



Invitations

Some unexpected scenarios and spaces can introduce fleas to customer properties, inside and out.

Fleas fester in obvious places like pet beds and overgrown shrubbery — and in areas easily overlooked, such as an upholstered car seat where Fido sits shotgun. Then there's the pet fur that's gummed up under the refrigerator. Many circumstances require “detective work” as David Bonett of Capitol Exterminating described.

Sometimes, the old white-towel trick will churn up fleas that mistake the vibration for the pet encounter they're after, especially if the root of the infestation is not immediately evident. This is a strategy Bonett deploys for callbacks, which only amount to 10% of his flea cases, he said.

“We drag an old towel or T-shirt across the floor throughout the house, and the adult fleas will immediately jump on it,” Bonett said. “They feel the heat and movement.”

Occasionally, the towel will pick up flea feces, too.

Louis Dorton, South Plains Pest Control, sometimes pulls on white socks and

scuffles across the floor. “Scooch across carpets to see if they pop up,” he said.

Hunting through attics and crawlspaces, along building foundations and under fence lines also proves helpful. Indoor and outdoor inspections are integral, with 81% of PCT 2025 State of the Flea Control Market survey respondents noting they always inform customers about the need to treat outdoors where flea problems originate.

Here’s a look at some common culprits PMPs target during flea inspections and some harborage zones that aren’t always easy to identify.

LOW AND BELOW. There were no pets in the house. But the neighborhood had plenty of wild visitors, recalled Craig George, owner of Planet Pest Solutions in Kansas City, Mo. He recalls a house he returned to five times because of fleas outdoors that were getting into the home.

“We tracked it down to a line of shrubbery, and there was a low spot where raccoons could get under the foundation of the house,” he said. “They had a nest with babies, and the whole thing was infested with fleas.”

Once treated — the low spot, that is — the problem went away, George recalls.

Bill Welsh is vice president of operations for Troy, Mich.-based Rose Pest Solutions, serving six states. His location had been treating a house for fleas every two weeks. “Come to find out, there were raccoons in the crawlspace,” he said. “Sure enough, as soon as we got them out, we solved the problem.”

And customers are grateful. “They’re on your person,” said Welsh of the blood-meal-feasting parasites. This is exactly why fleas are a small part of revenue but a big part of helping customers understand the importance of general pest control.

George recalled a resort client with an outbuilding and flea infestation. “There was a crawlspace under it full of feral cats,” he said. “They said they didn’t know — this was their claim. Those cats

were inundated with fleas, and we did have some callbacks on that one. You’d walk into the building where they keep garden equipment and your legs were covered.”

His treatment for this account (see details on page 8) was a 1-2-3 protocol of barrier, wall-to-wall residual with an IGR and fogging agent.

LOOK UP. Fleas usually congregate in low-lying spots where it’s dark (no lights, please) and humid areas where there’s excess moisture. Yard work is a pain, but customers are inviting a problem when they disregard fence-line brush, overgrown landscapes, tall grass and related critical hiding places for fleas.

If a pet is on a flea preventive, the parasite may hop “on board,” feed and perish after ingestion. Some fleas may still find their way indoors, but they’ll likely gravitate toward the pet and die a similar death.

However, there are instances where an infestation occurs where a pet doesn’t have access or there’s no pet at all, yet

people are getting the “memo” that something bites at home. Welsh points to chimney tops where squirrels and other wildlife can nest and invite fleas that infiltrate attic spaces.

Or crawlspaces, as Welsh discovered. “I never thought about asking the homeowner if we could look in there,” he said. That’s where he found the raccoons. “Once we solved the wildlife issue, problem solved.”

FREE-RIDERS. A pooch visits the dog park, tags along to a soccer game and wallows in the field or takes a hike. Next comes a ride home in the car. Even if a dog is on flea-tick-heartworm preventive, fleas can leap into appealing dark, warm crevices in the vehicle.

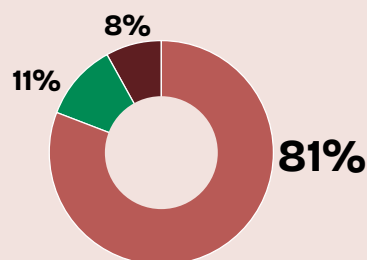
Then they can get a free ride into a home at a customers’ expense.

Is this common? Not really. But it happens, and Welsh said Rose service technicians remind customers to vacuum out the car and treat vehicles as they would their home. Sanitation is key in any location. ■

Get Out

When treating fleas, do you inform your customer about the need to treat outdoors where flea problems originate?

- yes, I always inform the customer
- sometimes, but not always
- no, that isn’t part of my protocol



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 126





BEYOND THE ITCH

FLEAS WHERE CUSTOMERS LEAST EXPECT THEM

Fleas are infamous for their ability to survive. This year, they won't just be surviving, they'll be thriving. The long, mild winter led to more animal movement and foraging, which in turn created more opportunities for flea emergence and spread.

While over-the-counter flea control is picking up, and consumers may feel more empowered to treat fleas themselves, most infestations occur where people aren't even looking. That's why the expertise of a seasoned pest control professional is vital.

WHEN AND WHERE FLEAS DEVELOP

- Before the first bloodmeal, fleas can wait weeks for a host, hiding in carpets, car upholstery, or even clothes.
- Fleas don't leave their host voluntarily once they've fed. After that first meal, they become metabolically dependent on blood, needing a meal every few hours to survive.
- Larvae feed on organic matter found in carpet fibers, under heavy furniture, or in thick upholstery, near where animals rest.

FINDING AND TREATING FLEA HOTSPOTS

Because fleas develop in compact places that are often overlooked, over-the-counter treatments aren't always applied in the right places. Homeowners may treat the living room rug but miss the baseboards, piano legs, or stairs where flea larvae are thriving. With more indoor-outdoor pets, doggy daycares, and mobile groomers, any pet can act as an unintentional carrier, bringing fleas home in their fur, crates, or accessories.

Professionals also respond to cases where "no one has pets" in the home. Fleas can develop under decks, sheds, or even crawlspaces via possums, raccoons, and other wild animals. In one real-world case, office staff were unknowingly bringing fleas in on their clothing after feeding outdoor cats near the office.



FLEA-BORNE ILLNESSES AND RISKS

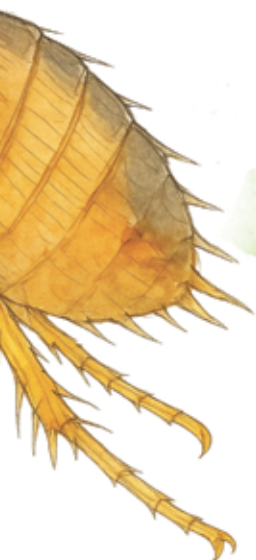
Cat scratch disease and tapeworms remain top concerns for pet owners, especially in California, Texas, and Hawaii. In the Southwest, plague still shows up in isolated incidents. Professionals note that the increased practice of bringing animals indoors in public places like restaurants can also increase the risk of flea-borne illnesses. Professional control remains critically important to mitigating risk.

TOOLS TO TREAT THE FLEA THREAT

Zoëcon Professional Products offers a comprehensive line of solutions that target fleas wherever they hide, indoors or out:

- Precor® Outdoor F-T-M: The most recent addition to the Precor® family. Prevents the emergence of adult fleas outdoors for up to eight weeks, delivering effective control of fleas, ticks, mosquitoes, and more than 50 other outdoor pests.
- Precor 2000® Plus Premise Spray: Covers 2,000 square feet and prevents reinfestations for up to seven months. Effective on all hard surfaces.
- Precor® IGR Concentrate: Goes deeper into the base of carpets and upholstery, preventing flea emergence for up to seven months. Controls adult and pre-adult fleas.
- Precor® 2625 Premise Spray: Broad-spectrum flea control that utilizes multiple modes of action for quick, effective knockdown of adult pests. Covers up to 2,625 square feet.
- Petcor®² Flea & Tick Spray: Contact spray treatment for use on dogs and puppies 10 weeks of age and older and cats and kittens 12 weeks of age and older.

Fleas may be tiny, but their impact is far-reaching. Professionals who understand the biology, the hiding spots, and the risks are better equipped to solve the problem before it spreads. Learn more about our full suite of solutions to treat fleas and other insects at www.zoecon.com.



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More than one service call, more than one control method and the most customer cooperation possible are a trifecta for knocking down fleas.

What's the Protocol?



"Fleas are a 'pet' no one wants in their home," said Luis Arroyo, All Pro Pest Control. "When they're inside and biting, people are anxious to get rid of them."

But as PMPs know, shooing fleas out of a home or yard is not an overnight process. To keep customers happy, they must know how the service works and what their job is to improve control efficacy.

"We live in an instant gratification society and if you don't explain the service, customers will think after you leave the problem should be gone," said Chet Miles, Miles Pest Control. "I tell them upfront, when I come in, the fleas don't say, 'Shoot! Chet's here, I'm gone.'"

The majority of PMPs agree that getting rid of fleas usually requires a multi-faceted service approach and more than one visit. Ninety-two percent of survey respondents reported using general-use insecticides and/or insect growth regulators (IGRs) to knock down the parasite.

The average callback rate for flea con-

trol services is 4.1%, and time spent on a typical residential flea job is 1 to 2 hours for 35% of respondents and ½ hour to 1 hour for 51% of respondents.

For these reasons, Capitol Exterminating sells flea control as a stand-alone service — as do 44% of PCT survey respondents, with 36% staging it as a one-time, as-needed visit. Ten percent bundle flea control with services targeting other yard pests, such as mosquitoes and ticks; and 10% include flea service with general pest control.

"We sell it as a stand-alone because it requires so much customer cooperation and the client has to take care of their pet," said Capitol's David Bonett.

At South Plains Pest Control, Louis Dorton sells flea control as a monthly offering from March to October. Letting customers know the exterior treatment also knocks down mosquitoes is a selling point.

"We explain the reason they aren't seeing more fleas is because of the service. If you can keep them engaged in the service, flea control is successful,"

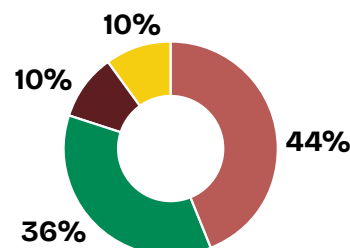
Dorton said. "But If they stop after the two-treatment service, 60 days later they call back with an issue and then we're starting from scratch."

PREP TALK. "This is a partnership," Bonett reminds customers, engaging them from the moment they call in to

Separate, As Needed

How is flea control offered at your service location?

- it is an add-on separate service
- it's a one-time, as-needed service
- it's part of a bundled service that also targets other yard pests like mosquitoes and ticks
- it's included with general pest control



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 126

inquire about flea control. “We let them know, the better they prepare, the better treatment we can perform.”

Bonett finds out how many pets are in the household, if any, and he instructs them to please remove the pets from the house during the service for at least four hours, until the product dries. But the biggie is vacuuming and not missing a spot. This includes drapery, upholstery — removing couch cushions and the like — along with carpeted stairs, underneath kitchen appliances and inside vehicles.

He adds another often-neglected point: empty vacuum bags or canisters in the outdoor trash. Otherwise, customers are simply relocating fleas and eggs to an appealing moist, dark environment to fester.

Before stepping foot on a property, Craig George, Planet Pest Solutions, coaches his team to discuss pet flea preventives with customers. “If we are going to do flea work, the pet needs to get treated either by a vet or with an over-the-counter preventive first,” he said. “Otherwise, you’re fighting a losing battle.”

SERVICE STEPS. The majority of PMPs that PCT interviewed separate flea control from general pest services and plan on more than one visit, usually a primary treatment with a follow-up. The initial treatment, often with a general insecticide and IGR, wipes out the adults while limiting egg and pupae survival rates if they are exposed to the product.

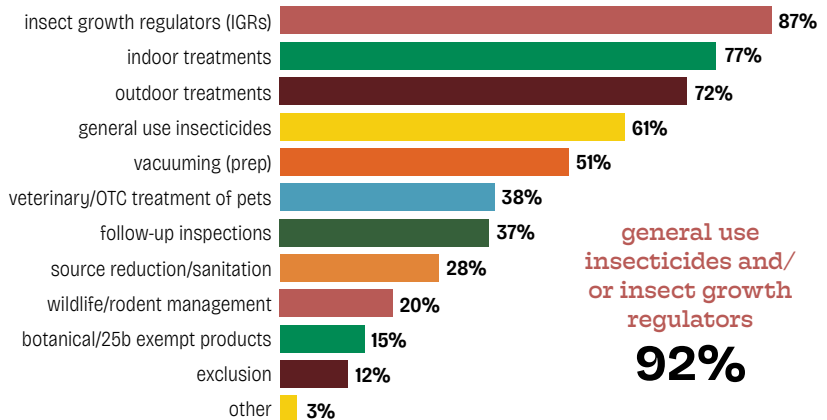
Still, customers must vacuum daily, George said. This agitates fleas and prompts them to emerge from hiding places. Plus, the vacuum swallows up dead fleas, eggs and pupae in its path, gradually thinning out the population.

“The flea activity won’t diminish as quickly if they aren’t moving around to pick up the residual insecticide,” George relates to clients.

After the first service, George also instructs customers to wash all pet bedding, blankets, plush toys and so on.

Getting the Job Done

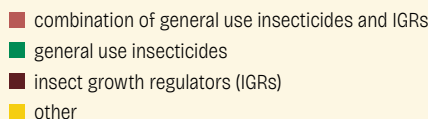
Which service protocols are included in your service location's flea control programs?



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 126; Respondents could choose multiple answers

Go-To Treatment

What is your service location's *primary* treatment regimen for controlling fleas?



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 126



“Additionally, we do an exterior perimeter treatment to create a barrier to keep additional fleas from getting into the house,” George said. “We treat wall-to-wall on the interior, and we schedule a 10- to 14-day follow-up to repeat the same service.”

Bonett said, “We stress to let the dog or cat roam the house like they usually do. If the animal is left to go where he

normally travels and he has been treated, any fleas that bypassed our product will jump on the animal, feed, then die.”

Managing and then containing the lifecycle is ultimately how effective flea control is accomplished — and importantly, treating pets and addressing culprits. George said, “Taking all these steps will really do a number on the flea population.” ■



Flea Facts



Most often, PMPs encounter cat fleas and dog fleas. These species are similar in appearance, biology and behavior. Here are some interesting facts about cat and dog fleas to share with customers and to help hone your treatment protocol:

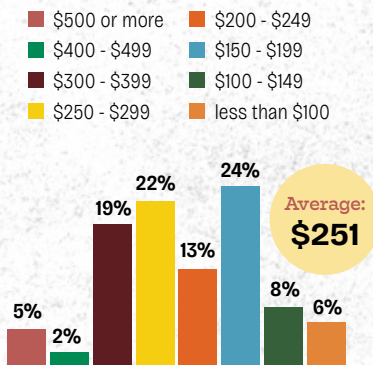
- Strong legs let fleas jump six inches straight up into the air.
- Backward projecting spines help them move between the hairs on host animals.
- Females lay 4 to 8 eggs at a time (400 to 800 in her lifetime) on the host animal and/or its bedding.
- Eggs hatch in about 10 days.
- Larvae feed on adult flea feces, which contains blood from the host animal.
- Depending on temperature, larvae molt three times over a period of seven days to several months.
- Larvae are ¼ inch long when fully developed and look like fly maggots except for their well-developed head.
- Mature larvae spin silken cocoons in which they pupate. The pupal stage lasts up to 20 weeks.
- Fleas stay in cocoons until vibrations — such as a pet or human walking nearby — stimulates them to emerge.
- Development from egg to adult flea can take 16 days to one year or more.

Source: PCT Technician's Handbook: A Guide to Pest Identification & Management, 4th Edition



Cost to be Flea Free

How much does your service location charge for a typical residential flea control service job?

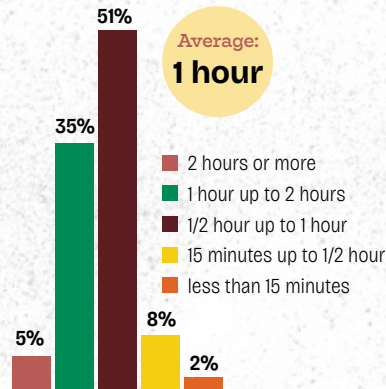


Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 124



Time-Intensive Service

How much time does your location spend on a typical residential flea control service job?

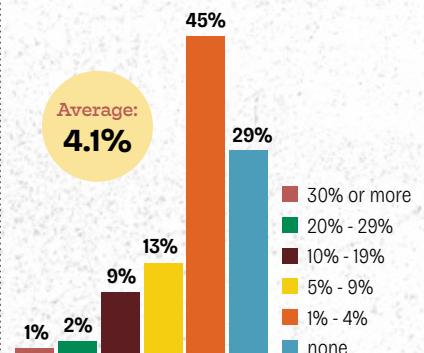


Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 124

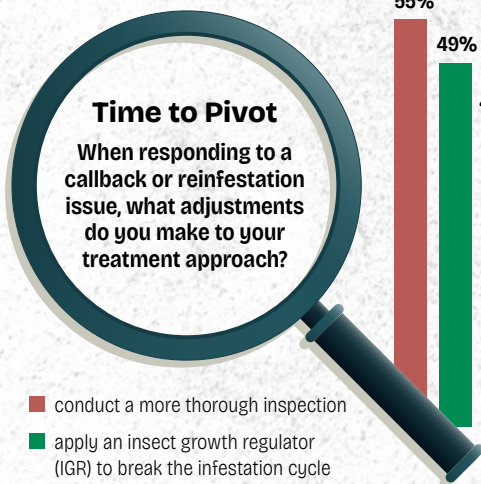


Repeat Street

What is the typical callback rate for your service location's flea control services?



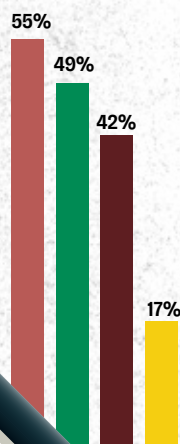
Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 126



Time to Pivot

When responding to a callback or reinfestation issue, what adjustments do you make to your treatment approach?

- conduct a more thorough inspection
- apply an insect growth regulator (IGR) to break the infestation cycle
- reapply the same treatment protocol
- other adjustments



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 88;
Respondents could choose multiple answers

Meeting Customer Needs

Does your service location offer flea control services?



Source: Readex Research; Number of respondents: 143



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