



**LICENSED TO KILL:** Pest control officer Easton Scott gears up for action.

Photo: Matthew Jordaan

# Zapping life's little bugs...

**W**HAT does your job entail? My job is to eradicate pests from customers' premises and maintain a healthy environment where safety is a priority.

The trickiest part of the job is to find the source of the infestation and how it occurred. We often have to go into basements, ceilings and dirty areas to do thorough inspections and treatments. Quite often we detect unspecified areas that need improvement to prevent pests entering and we communicate this to our customers.

**Average workday:** I collect my worksheet and approved pesticides from my office daily or weekly as needed. Each PCO works in a specific zone. A typical day will involve driving to clients; inspecting premises for pests; treating infestations; advising clients on recommendations to minimise infestations; and completing reports as required.

We establish the route according to the worksheet and then conduct our visits. It is important to know your zone thoroughly as this expedites planning and ensures getting to the customer on time.

**Best part of the job:** Going back to a customer and receiving compliments that you have eradicated their pest problems is certainly the best part.

**Worst part of the job:** We often have to get on our hands and knees to find the actual source of the pests. Fortunately, most premises are quite clean, neat and tidy.

Also, being tainted with the image of killing, we often receive negative reactions. We always try to

find the safest solution for eradicating a problem that will not be harmful to people or animals. Killing a pest is not always the first or only option. We discuss the processes with our customers to ensure they are comfortable with our techniques and procedures.

**Why did you choose this career?** In some of my previous casual employment I dealt with people. I enjoyed the interaction and the fast pace with deadlines that have to be met and I found it satisfying to provide a solution to a problem. In this industry, you are also providing customers with solutions that are specific to their needs.

**What else would you have liked to do?** I enjoy training and this is critical in developing the industry. Training eradicates ignorance and will help the industry to comply with health and safety regulations, which is very important.

**Are you paid enough?** My salary is adequate, but I have ambitions to improve it.

**Rate your work stress on a scale of 1 to 10:** Because I plan so thoroughly, this helps to keep stress at an adequate level. So I would say around 5.

**What do you do in your leisure time?** I spend time with my family. I have two kids and I think it's important to spend quality time with them. If my family is happy, it makes my work so much more enjoyable. I enjoy soccer and cricket and I participate in a social capacity in some of these.

**Travel opportunities?** If I develop further in my career there are a lot of travel opportunities.

## How to qualify as a pest control officer

**YOU NEED** to ensure you find the safest and best way of eradicating a problem with no harm done to people, animals or the environment.

Understanding pest biology is critical for effective treatment, which is done using only approved pesticides. The type and amount/combination of pesticides varies depending on the situation.

**Qualifications needed:** To register with the Department of Agriculture, you need to at least do a three-day short course in basic and advanced pest control subjects through the Pest Management Academy or the Pest Control Services Industry Board.

### Real jobs, real people



By Sarah-Jane Bosch

Every Monday Sarah-Jane Bosch interviews real people at work in Cape Town.

- Today: Easton Scott
- Job: Pest control officer
- Qualifications: National Certificate in Pest Control (NSCP) – Level 5
- Place of work: Rentokil Pest Control

**Where to train:** Companies will provide some in-house training and training can be obtained from the PCSIB or the PMA and some higher learning institutions.

**Expected earnings:** Qualified technicians can start with a salary

of about R8 000 a month.

**Contact:** Rentokil 0800 7368 6545; marketing@rentokil.co.za or www.rentokil.co.za; PCSIB on 012 654 7708 or 012 684 9000, www.pcsib.org.za; PMA 0861 99 99 00 or http://pestmanagementacademy.com