



# Code of Best Practice **Spring Trapping**

Version 2. August 2020.

## **British Pest Control Association Code of Best Practice for Spring Trapping**

A BPCA Code of Best Practice is a set of written rules which explains how people working in our industry should behave in a particular situation. It encompasses relevant legislation but is not the law in itself.

However, were a member to act outside of the norms outlined in the COBP, they may be subject to disciplinary action or be in breach of legislation. Members must abide by Codes of Best Practice

in their day-to-day work. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the Association.

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# British Pest Control Association

## Code of Best Practice for Spring Trapping

Spring traps consist of a trigger plate and some form of smooth jaw. They are essential control measures for pest management professionals, allowing us to control many species where toxic control measures may be illegal or inappropriate.

However, pest professionals must ensure that their control measures are legal, humane and are carried out with sensitivity.

### Legislation

**Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, (England, Wales and Scotland) and Wildlife (Northern Ireland) order 1985** state it is illegal to:

- "Set in position a trap calculated to cause bodily injury to any wild animal in schedule 6"
- "Intentionally (or recklessly) kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5"

**Animal Welfare Act 2006 (England and Wales) and Animal Health and Welfare Scotland (Act) 2006 and Welfare of Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011** state:

- "An animal is a 'protected animal' for the purposes of this Act if - it is under control of man whether on a permanent or temporary basis."
- "A captured animal must not suffer and should be provided with appropriate shelter, water and food".

Although spring traps are designed to kill, therefore you would not necessarily provide food and water, you must be aware of the requirement to ensure no suffering occurs.

The **Protection of Animals Act 1911** states:

- "Where spring traps are used for the purpose of catching,

**"Spring traps are essential control measures for pest management professionals, allowing us to control many species where toxic control measures may be illegal or inappropriate."**

or which are so placed as to be likely to catch, any hare or rabbit they should be inspected at reasonable intervals of time and at least once every day between sunrise and sunset."

Apart from spring traps set in holes for rabbits and hares\*, there are no statutory requirements regarding inspection frequency for the wide range of approved traps that can be used against other species.

\*Although current legislation does permit the use of spring traps in holes for hares note, there are no spring traps approved for control of hares.

However, it is recommended that traps are checked at least daily due to the possibility of a foul catch.

The efficacy of spring traps used for each species will be different, therefore the frequency of checks should be determined by the technician in charge and must be based on risk.

**Pest Act 1954, Agricultural (Scotland) act 1948 and Wildlife and Natural Environment Act 2011 (Northern Ireland)** states:

- "It is an offence to use a spring trap not approved by the government agencies under the spring trap approval orders"
- "It is an offence to use, or to permit the use, of a spring trap in unapproved circumstances"
- "It is an offence to sell, or possess any spring trap for such an unlawful purpose".

### Spring Trap Approval Orders (STAO)

The relevant STAOs for your country should be understood. You can search for STAOs here:

[legislation.gov.uk/all?title=spring%20trap%20approval%20order](https://legislation.gov.uk/all?title=spring%20trap%20approval%20order)

Certain traps designed for the destruction of pests such as rats, mice and other small ground vermin fall outside of the terms of the **Pest Act 1954** (and associated legislation). The **Small Ground Vermin Traps Order 1958** identify break back traps for small vermin and spring traps for mole control as control measures to which the rules for spring traps do not apply.

Pest Management Alliance (PMA) has a **Code of Best Practice for Humane Use of Break Back Traps** which must be followed.

Legislation such as the **Animal Welfare Act 2006** may still be breached if such traps are not applied in a humane manner.

### Considerations when using Spring Traps

Pest management professionals should consider the following:

1

Traps must always be set after consulting the manufacturer's instructions regarding pest species and trap location. If in any doubt, you should not set a trap.

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2

Where instructed by the manufacturer, traps should be set in an artificial or natural tunnel to prevent the access of non-target species.

3

Traps should be set as to prevent an unlawful catch of the target species ie not set with a risk of a leg or tail catch.

4

Every effort must be made to avoid trapping non-target species. Pest professionals who use spring traps must be able to recognise the signs and evidence of pest activity. If you cannot be assured of the species, you should consider a more appropriate treatment method. Alternatively, choose a trap that is licensed for the use against both possible pest species.

5

The entrance of trap tunnels should be restricted to prevent the entry of non-target species.

6

Ensure customers are aware of trap locations and, where necessary, warning stickers are deployed, for example, attic space hatches.

7

Spring traps should be firmly anchored in the treatment area.

8

Spring traps should be checked at regular intervals based on legislative requirements and/or the risk assessment compiled by the technician in charge.

9

Traps must not be set in open or accessible areas where members of the public, animals and pets can gain easy access to them.

10

Always wear suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when dealing with carcasses and traps to prevent the transmission of rodent-borne disease.

11

You must ensure that your chosen trap is approved for use in your country (England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales) by the relevant government agency.

Check their spring trap approval orders (as amended). If in doubt, consult your supplier or BPCA (members only).

12

Carcasses must be disposed of responsibly and in line with local requirements.

The capture and trapping of Edible Dormouse (*Glis glis*) must be done under the terms of a Class Licence WML-CL02. This is available from Natural England: [gov.uk/government/publications/edible-dormice-licence-to-trap-them](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/edible-dormice-licence-to-trap-them)



The British Pest Control Association requires that its members meet a range of criteria including strict abidance to all of our Codes of Best Practice. You can search for our members on the BPCA website [bpca.org.uk/find](https://www.bpca.org.uk/find)

BPCA makes strenuous efforts to ensure the accuracy and current relevance of its publications, which are intended for use by technically competent persons. However, this does not remove the need for technical and managerial judgement in practical situations. Nor do they confer any immunity or exemption from relevant legal requirements, including by-laws.

If you suspect something in this document is incorrect or out of date, please report it to [technical@bpca.org.uk](mailto:technical@bpca.org.uk).

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### Further reading

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- BASC Trapping Pest Mammals Code of Practice
- Spring Trap Approval (England) Order 2018, Spring Trap Approval (Scotland) Order 2011, Spring Trap Approval (Wales) Order 2019 and Spring Trap Approval (Northern Ireland) Order 2012
- PMA Code of Best Practice for Humane Use of Break Back Traps [pmalliance.org.uk/downloads](https://www.pmalliance.org.uk/downloads).