

Starbucks accused of using poisonous pesticide in Manhattan stores

 [cbsnews.com/news/starbucks-manhattan-no-pest-strips-lawsuit-accuses-coffee-chain-of-using-poisonous-pesticide-in-stores](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/starbucks-manhattan-no-pest-strips-lawsuit-accuses-coffee-chain-of-using-poisonous-pesticide-in-stores)

- No-Pest strips that emit poisonous vapor were allegedly used to control fruit flies and other pests at Starbucks stores throughout Manhattan, posing safety risk to workers and customers, two lawsuits claim.
 - Starbucks dismisses the claims as without merit, saying the lawyers and plaintiffs involved are trying to "incite public fear for their own financial gain."
 - Coffee chain says it quickly pulled the unsanctioned pest-control products from stores once it heard they were being used, and a third-party determined worker and customer safety were never compromised.
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Starbucks stores in New York City allegedly placed pest-control products spewing toxic vapors near bagels, pastries and coffee drinks to control fruit flies and other insects, endangering the health of its employees and customers, claim two lawsuits filed Tuesday.

"Starbucks stores throughout Manhattan have for many years been permeated with a toxic pesticide called Dichlorvos, which is highly poisonous and completely unfit for use in proximity to food, beverages and people," contends a class-action complaint filed on behalf of 10 customers in New York State Supreme Court.

Also known as DDVP, the pesticide is an active ingredient in No-Pest Strips made by Spectrum Brands, a product that can be purchased at home-improvement retailers and online, but according to its labeling is not intended for use near people or where food is prepared.

The strips were routinely found hidden under bagels and near pastry displays at Starbucks locations over the last three years by Paul D'Auria, a licensed pest control technician for AVP Termite & Pest Control who provided extermination services to Starbucks in New York from 2013 through June 2018, claims one of the lawsuits. D'Auria reported he personally observed Starbucks managers placing sets of DDVP No-Pest Strips "within virtually each of the more than 100 stores that he serviced," it noted.



No-Pest Strip made by Spectrum Brands, a pest-control product that can be purchased at home-improvement retailers and online, but according to its labeling is not intended for use near people or where food is prepared. Spectrum Brands

D'Auria voiced his concerns to his supervisor, who relayed the complaints to Starbucks management, with regional and district managers told about the hazard multiple times since 2015, the complaint stated. Yet, "Starbucks has continued to allow No-Pest Strips to be

used in its Manhattan stores – left to contaminate the food and beverages that Starbucks sells to consumers as the most premium products available."

A related lawsuit filed in federal court in the Southern District of New York seeks monetary damages for D'Auria, his supervisor and a former Starbucks manager allegedly terminated after voicing concerns about use of the pest-control strips. Starbucks terminated AVP's contract in June 2018.

When Starbucks learned that some of its employees had used pest-control products that violated the company's standards, it removed them from its stores, according to a Starbucks spokesperson on Tuesday, who could not immediately give a time frame for the products' use or removal. Starbucks does not serve customers food from its display cases, the spokesperson noted.

"The lawsuits filed by the plaintiffs and their attorneys we believe lacks merit and is an attempt to incite public fear for their own financial gain," the spokesperson for the coffee giant told CBS MoneyWatch.

"We go to great things to ensure the safety of our partners and customers and we are confident they have not been put at risk," added the spokesperson, who said a third-party had confirmed the finding. The company also refuted the notion that anyone had lost their job for voicing concerns.