

# Putrid NYC Starbucks Stores Tainted With Toxic Pesticide: Lawsuit

---

 [patch.com/new-york/new-york-city/putrid-nyc-starbucks-stores-tainted-toxic-pesticide-lawsuit](https://patch.com/new-york/new-york-city/putrid-nyc-starbucks-stores-tainted-toxic-pesticide-lawsuit)

NEW YORK — Starbucks used a toxic pesticide to kill bugs in filthy New York City stores despite multiple warnings that the chemical was dangerous to humans, two new lawsuits allege.

Workers in the coffee giant's Manhattan stores use strips containing a chemical known as Dichlorvos to tackle a bug problem that grew because of the shops' "disgusting" conditions, Starbucks patrons allege in a state Supreme Court complaint filed Tuesday.

But the chemical is not supposed to be used in restaurants or kitchens as it can cause nausea, diarrhea, anxiety and other symptoms in humans, the lawsuit says. Starbucks lets employees set out the strips even though the packaging says it shouldn't be used anywhere people are present, the complaint says.

"New Yorkers deserve to know what they are putting in their bodies and we call upon Starbucks to explain, as we allege in the complaint, its failure to take appropriate care for its customers' well-being," Douglas H. Wigdor, one of the lawyers handling the case, said in a statement.

In a separate federal lawsuit, a former Starbucks manager and two ex-pest control technicians say the company repeatedly ignored warnings that the pest strips were putting its customers in danger.

That complaint alleges that Starbucks fired the manager, Rafael Fox, after he complained about the strips and axed the contract of a pest-control firm whose workers warned against using the strips.

"Rather than responding to our clients' urgent complaints, Starbucks instead chose to methodically bury them," Ariel Graff, a lawyer for the three plaintiffs in that case, said in a statement.

But Starbucks slammed the lawsuit as baseless and said no customers or employees were put at risk.

"This lawsuit is totally without merit and it's an attempt by the plaintiffs and their attorneys to scare the public for their own financial gain," Starbucks spokeswoman Sarah Albanesi said, adding that the company does not retaliate against employees who raise concerns.

The pest-control strips at issue are against company guidelines and employees were directed to get rid of them when the company learned they were being used, a Starbucks spokesperson said.

A third-party expert determined that no customers or workers were exposed to the chemical at a level that would have been dangerous to their health, the spokesperson said.