

Community IPM

Integrated Pest Management for School and Municipal Buildings, Step I

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What is Integrated Pest Management (IPM)?

IPM is a proactive approach that uses a wide range of methods to solve pest problems while minimizing risks to people, property, and the environment.

Generally, in an IPM program pest prevention begins with identifying the pests correctly. Next, determine their origin and assess any risks posed by their presence. Eliminate sources of food and water, points of entry and shelter for long-term suppression of pests. Identify conditions that invite infestations early, document them and modify these conditions by improving sanitation, maintenance, and storage practices. Only consider the use of pesticides once these methods have been fully explored and, where feasible, used.

One of the most important aspects of IPM is that it involves the use of several control options—not just one—to manage existing pests.

IPM: A step-by-step strategy

To conduct a successful IPM program in your facility, you'll need to routinely check the conditions of your building and keep track of your findings. Even if no pests are present, routine inspections, maintenance, and cleaning activities occur. If a problem is discovered, then the pests are identified, the problem is diagnosed, and a combination of IPM techniques is used to deter the pests.

The elements of an IPM program

1. Develop an integrated pest management plan.
2. Keep records using site plans, scouting records, and a log book.
3. Inspect and monitor for conditions that encourage pests.
4. Keep the facility sanitary and well maintained.
5. Identify and diagnose the problem correctly. Decide if control is needed.
6. Combine low-risk methods to manage pests.
 - a. Cultural—change human behaviors and habits.
 - b. Physical and mechanical—exclude, catch and remove pests.
 - c. Chemical—kill or repel pests directly.
7. Work effectively with a pest management professional.
8. Focus on education of staff and build awareness.
9. Evaluate the IPM program to identify gaps and areas for progress.



House centipedes are common in school and municipal buildings.



Inspection is the first step in pest control.

IPM Step One: Develop an Integrated Pest Management Plan

The pest management plan provides an organized framework and chain of command for the IPM program. If your workplace has no written IPM policy, a plan can still be created within the facilities maintenance department to outline what is to be done and by whom. A good plan helps you avoid haphazard pest management and emergencies and provides backup when pest management practices are questioned. The plan can help you demonstrate that only the most appropriate actions are taken. It will also encourage the necessary cooperation needed from all building occupants.

A successful integrated pest management plan will include several elements. Select an IPM coordinator who is willing to make the program a success. Raise awareness of workers involved, so they can cooperate with pest management and participate more fully in reporting pest sightings. Training workshops are often available from pest management industry groups or local cooperative extension offices. Employee training should cover IPM-related subjects such as building maintenance, pest reporting, sanitation, pest prevention, and physical methods of pest control, such as trapping. When employees understand why certain strategies are used, they are more likely to cooperate.

If pest management is performed through in-house staff, each worker applying pesticides must be a NYS DEC-licensed commercial pesticide applicator. The place of business must also be a licensed pesticide business (see www.dec.ny.gov for more information). All professional pest management technicians must be licensed to apply pesticides. Ask if technicians have received IPM training. Repairs and building maintenance are vital to successful pest management. Be aware that most often, the contracted service will not include building maintenance and repairs. Some companies may offer these services, so ask about it and get prices.

If pest management is handled by a pest management vendor, the signed contract should reflect the policy or plan established at your workplace. The New York State Office of General Services has examples of IPM bid specifications on its website. Search for "IPM" at www.ogs.ny.gov.

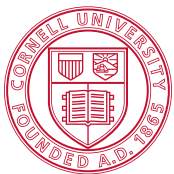
Other elements of a successful IPM plan include developing a site plan, inspecting and monitoring for pests, keeping records of pest and pest management activities, maintaining good communication and cooperation between the IPM coordinator and all parties, and evaluating the program annually. These and other topics are covered in additional fact sheets.



The IPM coordinator can raise awareness among employees and explain why IPM is important.



Simple modifications, like this gravel barrier around the building, can reduce pest activity inside.



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