

Guidelines for Implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programs in School Buildings

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) - Definition: Simply put, Integrated Pest Management is a common sense method of dealing with pest problems that does not rely on scheduled pesticide applications. IPM is a comprehensive approach that combines effective, economical, environmentally sound, and socially acceptable methods to prevent and solve pest problems. IPM emphasizes pest prevention and provides a decision-making process for determining *if* pest suppression is needed, *when* it is needed, *where* it is needed, and *what* pest control tactics are appropriate. *IPM uses multiple tactics -cultural, physical, biological, and chemical- that are combined into a comprehensive plan.*

IPM is a practical way to control pests. Since pests cannot survive without food, water, hiding places, and entry points (into buildings), IPM begins with facility inspections to determine availability of resources to pests and identifies appropriate pest prevention and control measures. Routine pesticide use is eliminated in IPM programs. Instead, pests are denied access to life-sustaining resources by incorporating a pest management perspective on sanitation, food storage, waste management, recycling, maintenance and repairs, and other activities in and around school facilities. Pesticides are used only when there is an identified need and in accordance with the prevailing state and federal pesticide regulations, the NC School Children's Health Act (G.S. 115-47c (47) and the school system's IPM policy. Using an IPM plan, the risk of pesticide exposure to school occupants is greatly reduced and pest control planning is improved.

What does IPM involve? Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a continual process not an event. There are 6 steps in the practice of IPM:

(1) Inspections and monitoring, (2) Pest Identification, (3) Decision-making, (4) Taking action, and (5) Evaluation and follow-up, and (6) documentation and record-keeping

The following is a guideline for implementing IPM in schools:

1. School IPM Policy: An official policy to guide program efforts is needed to ensure that all personnel understand the commitment of the school district to IPM and eliminates any chance of confusion. The School Children's Health Act requires that school districts adopt an IPM policy to guide implementation efforts. A sample IPM policy for North Carolina schools can be obtained from the North Carolina School Boards Association website www.ncsba.org or from the N. C. Cooperative Extension Service IPM web site <http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu>.

2. Developing an IPM Contract: Many school districts contract pest control to a pest management professional (PMP). To ensure the service provided conforms to the IPM approach and school IPM policy, a contract must be written that describes the IPM services to be delivered. A sample contract for indoor pest control services can be obtained from <http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu> and a guideline on how to select a pest control contractor can be obtained at <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/ent/notes/Urban/index.htm/>

3. Certification and Training:

Pesticide Applicator Training: Pesticide applicator training and certification is strongly recommended for school employees who apply pesticides in school buildings and grounds. Pesticide applicator training and certification information can be obtained from the North Carolina State University pesticide safety program website <http://ipm.ncsu.edu/pesticidesafety/> and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (Structural Pest Control and Pesticide Division) website www.ncdagr.gov/SPCAP/Index.htm.

IPM Training: The School IPM Program of North Carolina State University offers training on Integrated Pest Management annually to school personnel and pest control companies. For training dates and venues check <http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu>.

4. Pest identification, pesticide use notification and recordkeeping:

Pest Identification: Selection of pest control action is based on pest identity. Appropriate strategies are specific for each pest. North Carolina State University offers a pest identification clinic that can be utilized by school districts in North Carolina. Information on this service can be found at www.cas.ncsu.edu/plantpath/extension/clinic/. Information about this service can be found by contacting a N. C. Cooperative Extension Center. A center is located in every county and you can find the nearest Extension Center by visiting the website www.ces.ncsu.edu/counties.

Notification: According to the School Children's Health Act school systems are required to notify parents or guardians and staffs before unscheduled or non-exempt pesticides are applied on school property. Notification guidelines and sample notification forms can be obtained from <http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu/resources.htm> or www.toxicfreeNC.org.

Recordkeeping: Documentation and record-keeping are important components of IPM and should be included in the school IPM policy. Resources for recording: (i) pesticide applications can be obtained from NCDA & CS at www.ncdagr.gov/SPCAP/Index.htm and (ii) for IPM activities from <http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu/>.

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** IPM guidelines for school ornamentals, landscapes and grounds will be communicated when they are available within the year.