



# COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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## GETTING STARTED WITH SCHOOL IPM

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This fact sheet outlines the steps in developing a school IPM program.

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## Getting Started With School IPM

Many states are beginning to adopt **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** practices in school facilities. IPM is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common sense practices. IPM programs use current, comprehensive information on the life cycles of pests and their interactions with the environment. This information, in combination with available pest control methods, is used to manage pest damage by the most economical means, and with the least possible hazard to people, property, and the environment. IPM programs take advantage of all pest management options possibly including, but not limited to, the prudent use of pesticides.

### Four Points of IPM:

- Prevention of pest populations
- Application of pesticides only "as needed"
- Selecting the least hazardous pesticides effective for control of targeted pests.
- Precision targeting of pesticides to areas not contacted or accessible to the Children, faculty, or staff.



An efficient IPM program can be integrated with the school's existing pest management plan and other school management activities. School management activities such as preventive maintenance, janitorial practices, landscaping, occupant education, and staff training are all part of an IPM program.

The following are steps to follow in developing a school IPM program:

### Develop an IPM policy statement

The policy statement should explain what is expected, how existing services will be included, and how students and staff can take part in the program

### Designate pest management roles

Designation of roles for the pest control contractor, staff, students, and parents is an important part of an IPM

program. Cooperation among people is the key to success. The more the students and staff join in, the better the program will work.

- **Students and staff** - The most important job for students and staff is to help in keeping the school clean. Prevention of pests depends on everyone working together to clean up litter and leftover food
- **Parents** - Parent's first school pest management responsibility is to learn about and follow IPM practices at home. Pests carried from home in notebooks, lunch boxes, or clothing can slow the success of an IPM program.
- **Pest manager** - The pest manager is the person who observes and evaluates the site, or directs others to do so, and decides if control measures are necessary. The pest manager could be the school principal, the custodian, a designated faculty member, or an individual under contract to the school system. The pest manager designs a pest management system that takes into account potential liability, applicator and occupant safety, costs, effectiveness, time required, and customer or occupant satisfaction.

The mere presence of one insect does not always require the application of a pesticide. The pest manager and school staff should decide in advance how many pests are harmless and how many require control.

### **Set pest management objectives**

Examples of pest management objectives include:

- Managing pests that are found on school sites to prevent interference with learning
- Eliminating possible injury to students and staff
- Preserving the integrity of buildings

### **Inspect sites, identify pests, and monitor pests**

An IPM program consists of a cycle of inspecting, identifying, monitoring, evaluating, and choosing the appropriate method of control. Routine inspection and accurate identification of pests are vital steps in IPM to ensure that control methods will be effective. Once the pest has been identified and the source of its activity pinpointed, habitat modifications - primarily, exclusion, repair, and sanitation efforts - may greatly reduce the prevalence of the pest. Monitoring includes inspecting areas for pest evidence, entry points, food, water, and harborage sites, and estimating pest population levels. The information gained through monitoring is evaluated to determine whether the action threshold has been exceeded and what can be done in the way of prevention.

### **Apply IPM control strategies**

When the number of pests becomes greater than the action threshold - the levels of pest populations or site environmental conditions that require remedial action - the pest control contractor takes action. He/she may physically remove the pests or suggest changes to the habitat so that pests can't get to food, shelter, and water. Other control strategies used in an

IPM program may include building repair, improved sanitation, or careful application of a pesticide.

### **Evaluate results and keep records**

Accurate record keeping allows the pest manager to evaluate the success of the IPM program. Records also help in forecasting the appearance of seasonal pests to predict future pest outbreaks.

### **References and Resources**

Koehler, P.G. and Fasulo, T.R. 2001. *School IPM, Integrated Pest Management in Schools*. University of Florida, Gainesville, FL. <http://schoolipm.ifas.ufl.edu/>

*Pest Control in the School Environment: Adopting Integrated Pest Management*. August 1993. EPA 735-F-93-012. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Pesticide Programs, Washington, D.C. <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm/brochure/>

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