

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Depending on Assistance Needed, Call:	
DGS Environmental Health and Safety	202-576-8962
Agency Contact	
Other	

Situation Description

It is the policy the DC Public Schools to manage pests in and around schools. Pests such as cockroaches, rats, mice, bees, wasps, and ants are annoying and can disrupt learning. Some pests bite, sting, transmit disease, or cause allergic response. Others can damage buildings or landscape plants. Pests will be managed to:

- Reduce potential health hazards or threats to safety.
- Enhance the quality of life for students, faculty, and staff.
- Prevent damage to school structures or property.
- Prevent pests from spreading into the community.

Furthermore, it is the policy of DC Public Schools to minimize the risk of exposure to pesticides in the school environment. Pesticides shall be used only if necessary to suppress verified pest problems, and only after consideration of nonchemical control options. When use of a pesticide is deemed necessary, an effective pesticide product and application method posing the least hazard will be chosen.

Each school shall have an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Logbook and it shall be available at all times. The logbook contains everything about the program, all pest sightings, actions taken, recommendations made, and reports written.

Legal Requirements

In May of 2010, the Council of the District of Columbia unanimously passed the Healthy Schools Act of 2010, which requires the establishment of integrated pest management in the DC Public Schools, under Title V, Sec. 501 (a)(1)(D).

In June of 2008, the Loretta Carter Hanes Pesticide Consumer Notification Act of 2008 became effective, which requires that citizens are provided with information and notification of outdoor pesticide applications.

Administration of School IPM Program

IPM is a collaborative effort involving DGS, DCPS Central Office, principals, pest control specialists, custodial, food service, and maintenance staff, and even teachers and students. To be effective, the school IPM Program needs to be codified into school administration, so it can be integrated with management activities such as preventive maintenance, janitorial practices, landscaping, staff training, and even, in some cases, teaching.

Each DC Public School shall designate a responsible staff member as an "IPM liaison" to ensure that school staff takes the corrective actions requested by the IPM Coordinator, Maintenance Department, or IPM Technicians, unless there is a valid reason not to do so. The organizations and staff positions with direct IPM responsibility include the following: DGS staff - IPM Coordinator, Maintenance, and Grounds; staff at each school - Principal, IPM Liaison, Custodial Foreman, and Cafeteria Manager, and the contractor IPM Technician.

Roles and Responsibilities of School Personnel

Interaction among the stakeholders involved in a school pest management system is the key to success or failure of an IPM program. IPM requires commitment, communications, and cooperation from administrators, faculty, staff, IPM Technicians, and even parents and students in order to succeed in a school setting. Roles and responsibilities of the various groups are as follows:

DC Public Schools

The Central Office is responsible for providing commitments necessary for IPM to succeed. Administrators need to take action when persistent sanitation problems are not being corrected, or requests for building repairs ("pest-proofing") are not completed.

Principals

The principal, of course, is the key player at each individual school. Each must ensure that their school's faculty, staff, and students "buy into" the program and cooperate with the IPM technicians. On the other hand, they need to ensure that the IPM technician is meeting the needs of the school: successfully managing pests, minimizing exposure to pesticides, especially to children, and providing adequate reports and information.

IPM Liaison

The IPM liaison, typically the Custodial Foreman, at each school is responsible for coordinating IPM activities at that school, and for ensuring that school staff take the corrective actions requested by IPM technicians (or for determining that there is a good reason for not doing so). The liaison is also responsible for maintaining the IPM Logbook.

Custodians

School custodians have primary responsibility for sanitation and trash management in most school areas. Poor sanitation makes life easy for cockroaches, flies, ants, mice, rats, and other pests that need nothing more than a little spilled food, a drippy faucet and a place to hide. Custodians need to understand the connection between pest problems and food, standing water, and clutter. They need to respond to requests from IPM technicians for housekeeping or trash management action. They also have a responsibility to report any pest problems they notice.

Cafeteria Managers

Kitchens are a focus of many pests such as cockroaches, rodents, flies, and stored product insects. Cafeteria managers already practice good sanitation for food safety reasons, but they also need to cooperate with the IPM program by responding to sanitation improvement requests from IPM technicians.

Teachers

Teachers have three responsibilities related to the DC Public Schools IPM program. First is to explain its principles, objectives, and tactics to students. They may even, at times, incorporate IPM into their curricula since IPM relates to environmental studies and to public health. Second is to practice and encourage good sanitation practices: eating in food areas, cleaning up leftover food and food debris, minimizing clutter, and the like to help prevent pest problems from occurring. Third is to report any pest sightings, problems, or conditions that might favor pests.

Students

There are more students at school than staff, and so student activities regarding food and trash have the greatest impact on sanitation, and ultimately on the attractiveness of the school to pests. Students need to cooperate with the IPM program by eating only in assigned areas, cleaning up food debris from tables and lockers, and putting trash in proper trash receptacles. Students also have a role in learning about IPM, and reporting pest problems to their teachers or other staff members.

Parents

Parents are their children's natural advocates. They should feel free to seek information about the school's IPM program, and participate in advisory committees that address pest-related issues. Parents need to learn about the IPM program at the school, and to practice IPM at home. Switching to IPM tactics at home will not only reduce pests and pesticide risks there, but will reduce the likelihood that pests will be brought from home to the school in notebooks, backpacks, lunch boxes, or clothing.

Education

The IPM Program includes a commitment to education of teachers, staff, parents, and students. Building maintenance and grounds personnel should understand pest-proofing and other steps they can take to keep pests from entering buildings. Housekeeping and custodial staff can learn to find and give special attention to areas with sanitation problems. Food service workers need to learn about the connection between inadequate sanitation and pests. School nurses need information on pest hazards and the types and methods of pesticide use. Teachers and students need to see their roles in preventing pest problems from developing.

The school system should provide regular IPM and hazardous substances training opportunities for the appropriate custodial staff. DGS should ensure maintenance and the IPM contractors are properly trained prior to them applying any pesticides.

Schools should encourage parent-teachers associations and school-affiliated student organizations to participate in the IPM program. Specific instructions should be provided on student participation: good housekeeping, keeping windows or screens closed, identifying pest problems, not disturbing insect monitors, and not using pesticides in the school.

IPM is a scientific and ecologically-based approach to pest management. It is an ideal topic for classes on the environment or ecology, and there are many IPM textbooks and teaching aids available. DC public school teachers should consider incorporating IPM into their science, environmental studies, and public health curricula.

Monitoring

Monitoring includes regular and thorough inspections, accurate identification of pests, and assessment of conditions. Monitoring includes the identifying and locating pests, identifying areas of critical sensitivity (classrooms, infirmary, etc.), estimating size of pest populations, identifying the factors that are contributing to the pest problem (poor sanitation, improper storage, holes in walls, etc.), reporting management practices that could affect pest populations or pest management activities (trash pickup, lighting, construction, etc.), identifying non-target species that could be killed or injured, assessing natural enemies and potential secondary pests, assessing environmental conditions (temperature, humidity, weather or seasonal changes).

There are three basic components to the monitoring program at each DC public school:

- 1) walk-through visual inspections of all areas of the building including outside;
- 2) use of various types of monitoring traps (sticky traps, pheromone traps, and insect light traps); and
- 3) information from personnel working on site, including review of the logbook. All occupants of a building are encouraged to report pest activity.

Pesticide Use in DC Public Schools

Pesticides are not applied automatically or on a schedule, but only when justified against identified pests and when nonchemical control measures are unavailable, impractical, ineffective, or likely to fail to reduce pest below action thresholds. Pesticides will be applied by license applicators and in accordance with regulations. Pesticides will not be stored in or on school grounds. What is most important is that whenever pesticides are used in and around a school, they are used in ways that minimize risk to people, particularly to children.

Notification of Pesticide Use

The IPM Coordinator or the IPM Technician will post signs at the site of the application prior to any use of pesticide. The school Principal will post notices in conspicuous locations such as bulletin boards commonly seen by students and staff, and make an announcement on the school's public announcement system at least 24 hours before the application of a pesticide, warning students and staff of indoor and landscape applications, with warnings to avoid posted or flagged areas until signs are removed.

Elementary Schools - At least 24 hours before the pesticide is applied in a school building, or on school grounds, the IPM Coordinator will provide the common name of the pesticide, planet date, time and location of application to the school principal who in turn will provide written notification to each parent/guardian and staff member.

Middle or High Schools - The IPM Supervisor will provide the same information above to the school's principal, allowing sufficient time for the principal to notify students and staff.

Principals will provide written notification to each parent, guardian, or staff member on the pesticide notification list.

Emergency Pesticide Applications

A pesticide may be applied in a school building or on school grounds without prior notification only if an emergency pest situation exists. In the case of an emergency pesticide application in an elementary school building or school grounds, within 24 hours after pesticide application or on the next school day, the school will provide the information identified above to each parent, guardian, or staff member.

Use of Bait Stations

Before a bait station is used in a school, the IPM Coordinator or the IPM Technician will place a notice or sign on the door of the room in which the bait station is placed indicating the date of placement, the name of the contact person for additional information including information on potential adverse effects. The notice or sign will remain posted until the bait station is removed (applies to monitoring stations as well).

Recordkeeping

Good IPM requires good records to help IPM Technicians solve pest problems, meet legal requirements, give a historical perspective of pests, and let technicians anticipate seasonal pest problems. The information that must be recorded includes pest reports, control actions, housekeeping problems, structural deficiencies, and other problems contributing to pests. In schools, records must identify sensitive areas where pesticides (and certain other control methods) must be used carefully or not at all.

IPM Service Report

This report is similar to a "service record" or "service ticket" in regular pest control but includes what was checked, what was found, and what was done by the IPM Technician on that service date. If any pesticides were applied, this form would include a product and treatment description the site, the application rate, and the amount applied. A copy is given to the school and a copy saved for the records of the IPM Coordinator (DGS - EHS).

School IPM Logbook

The IPM Logbook is the centerpiece of IPM operations and recordkeeping: a permanent record book, usually a loose-leaf book, which is available to school staff at all times. (In large schools there may be different logbooks for different areas, but in most schools there will be but one.) The logbook contains everything about the program, all pest sightings, actions taken, recommendations made, and reports written. The logbook includes miscellaneous information pesticide information, reports, monitoring data, pest activity, floor plans, and general information.

Smart DGS - Work Orders

When a school identifies a pest problem that requires immediate intervention, in addition to reporting the pest sighting in the log above, the school administration should contact the DGS Work Management Division to submit a work order request. This can be done by either calling the DGS Customer Service Desk at 202-576-7676 or on-line through Smart DGS.