**What Is IPM?**

Integrated pest management, IPM for short, is a decision-making process that combines practical pest management strategies to prevent or control pests in ways that reduce risks to health and the environment. IPM offers practical, affordable, long-term solutions for managing school pest problems in ways that ensure a healthy learning environment. The success of school IPM depends on the involvement of many individuals; students, teachers, school staff, administration, and parents are all participants in the IPM program.

**IPM is:**

 An effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management.

 A program that relies on a combination of common sense practices.

 A management strategy based on communication and education, and supported by a committed school administration.

 A partnership between the school community and qualified pest management professionals.

 An elimination or reduction of the reasons that insects, rodents, and plants become pests.

 The knowledge of when and how to remedy pest problems.

 Elimination of pest entryways into school facilities.

 Integration of cultural, mechanical, and lowest-impact chemical controls.

**IPM includes:**

 Pest prevention—outsmarting pests for long-term solutions.

 Monitoring regularly to detect pests before they become a problem.

 Acting against pests only when necessary.

 Applying pesticides only when all other management methods fail.

 Choosing effective, low-risk pest control materials and precision application methods.

 Making pesticide applications only in areas that are inaccessible to students, faculty, and staff.

 Record-keeping and regular program evaluation and revision.

**Examples of IPM Practices:**

 Custodians and their managers learn the work habits and conditions that help or hinder pests.

 Grounds managers minimize environmental conditions that attract or support pests.

 Food services staff members learn to minimize the availability of food and water to insects and rodents;

 Students and teachers take responsibility for keeping their rooms as clean as possible.

 Keep vegetation, shrubs and wood mulch at least one foot away from structures.

 Fill cracks and crevices in walls, floors and pavement.

 Empty lockers and desks and thoroughly clean them at least twice yearly.

 Clean food-contaminated dishes, utensils, and surfaces by the end of each day.

 Clean garbage cans and dumpsters regularly.

 Collect litter and dispose of properly at least once a week.

 Apply fertilizers to athletic fields several times during the year, rather than one heavy application.

 Identify the pest or problem before taking action.

 Use spot treatments when pesticides are necessary, not area-wide applications.

**Starting Your IPM Program The IPM Team**

**IPM is a Team Effort**

Just like academics and athletics, an effective IPM program relies on teamwork. Administration, staff, students, and the community all play important roles. Contributions by each team member are critical and communication among team members is essential to a successful IPM program. If your school system is small, your team may be able to function well with a small team. A bigger school system needs a more complex system for coordinating and communicating IPM activities among departments and outside contractors. An advisory committee can be helpful for long-range planning and regular evaluation of the IPM program in a large school district. In all schools, however, the key to an effective IPM program is designation of a key staff member to coordinate the program and incorporate IPM activities into the school’s policy and administrative and facilities management programs. Adding IPM to the academic curriculum will further enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of your school’s IPM program.

**Suggested IPM Team**

**Independent Schools**

• IPM coordinator (administrator or knowledgeable staff member)

• Administrator (headmaster or principal if that person is not the IPM coordinator)

• Head custodian

• Head maintenance staff

• Head cook

• Teacher

• School nurse

• Student representative

• Any contracted service providers (including pest control technicians, janitorial service providers, maintenance contractors)

**School Departments and Districts**

• District IPM coordinator (often this is the facilities director)

• Team leader from each school (such as school principal or head custodian at each school)

• District business official

• District or school nurse

• District maintenance director

• District head custodian

• District sports fields and grounds maintenance director

• District athletic director

• District food service director

• Student representative

• Science or horticulture teacher

• Any contracted service providers

• Technology coordinator (for electronic record-keeping and notification systems)

**For the School**

**Administrator**

**Health and Safety are the Primary Goals of IPM**

School administrators are responsible for the health and safety of their school facilities. Students and staff spend a significant part of each day on school property and should not be stung, bitten, or otherwise harmed by pests; nor should they be exposed to pesticides. IPM addresses these concerns but needs administrative leadership and support. As a school administrator you play a critical role in ensuring that your school’s IPM program meets mandated requirements, that staff are adequately trained, that contractors provide quality services, and that adequate resources are made available. Although you will probably delegate tasks required for the day-to-day operation of your schools’ IPM program, you must be familiar enough with your program to ensure that it meets your schools’ needs and complies with state requirements.

Many schools rely entirely on well-trained staff to implement their IPM program. Other schools may choose to augment their IPM program with contracted pest service providers. Either way, the key to IPM is to focus on incorporating IPM tasks into your schools’ regular facilities management practices. Incorporating IPM lessons into academic and service-learning programs provides additional opportunities for strengthening the effectiveness and sustainability of your schools’ IPM program.

IPM relies on:

• Pest prevention through sanitation and maintenance.

• Systematic monitoring for common pests.

• Effective communication to report and manage pest prevention and pest control needs.

• Combinations of low-risk tactics for managing pest problems when they occur.

• Record keeping and regular program evaluation.

The administrator checklist provides an overview of administrator’s responsibilities for establishing and maintaining the school IPM program.

**IPM Advisory**

**Committee**

A school-wide IPM program involves the cooperation of the entire school community. For members of the community to accept their roles in the program, they must understand how IPM benefits the members individually and the community as a whole. Schools often find it useful to establish an IPM Advisory Com- mittee to help support development and provide oversight for the schools’ IPM program. The committee can provide valuable input from interested parties in the school community and is typically derived from an existing health and safety, indoor air quality, or facilities management committee. This team can—and probably should—include representatives from the following distinct groups.

**Teachers and Support Staff** play a strong role in IPM for several reasons. They are often the first to observe pests or pest-prevention needs in classrooms. They are also the primary contact with students and their families. Sanitation, food, pets, and plants can be critical issues for pest prevention in the classroom. IPM is even more effective when it is included as part of the academic curriculum, too.

**Maintenance, Custodial, and Grounds-keeping Directors and Staff** play key roles in an IPM program. These people are responsible for recognizing and correcting conditions that may lead to pest problems. Examples include water leaks, potential pest entryways, and poor sanitation practices. It is essential that this staff be adequately trained to recognize and prevent pest problems.

**Kitchen Staff.** Food handling and preparation areas are among the most critical areas for pest management. It is essential that kitchen staff understand the importance of good sanitation and proper food storage and play an active role in implementing the IPM program.

**School Nurse.** The school nurse should maintain copies of safety data sheets (SDS) for all chemicals used on school property and keep a list of any students with asthma or chemical sensitivities. The nurse may also help coordinate notification about the use of chemicals at the school. If head lice are a potential problem, the school nurse should educate parents and staff about preventing their spread.

**Administrators and School Board Representatives** can provide the resources and authority necessary to implement an IPM Program, including preventive maintenance and repair.

**Contract Service Providers**, if employed by a school system, can provide much of the expertise required to establish an IPM program. If professional pest managers are contracted, their input to committee decision-making may be very valuable.

**Students.** Information should be shared with students so they understand their role in IPM such as keeping lockers and desks clean, cleaning up trash and spilled food, and maintaining good personal hygiene. In some schools, students are active participants in the IPM program. Students can also provide important information by reporting the pests they see in the Pest Sighting Log.

**Parents.** It is important that parents be included and that they be aware of the role that the community plays in the schools’ IPM program. Sharing information with parents supports IPM by identifying community concerns and improving pest prevention practices. Including parents on the advisory council can also attract additional resources and expertise to the school.

**IPM Advisory**

**Committee Roster**

Use this worksheet to record committee member names, contact information, and dates of service on the committee.

Chair Name Phone E-mail Term End Date

Member Name Phone E-mail Term End Date

Member Name Phone E-mail Term End Date

Member Name Phone E-mail Term End Date

Member Name Phone E-mail Term End Date

Member Name Phone E-mail Term End Date

Member Name Phone E-mail Term End Date

Member Name Phone E-mail Term End Date

Member Name Phone E-mail Term End Date

Member Name Phone E-mail Term End Date

Annual IPM plan review will be completed by: (date).

**The School IPM Coordinator**

**Role and Function of the IPM Coordinator**

The IPM coordinator is a school employee who coordinates and leads the day-to-day IPM activities within the school unit. The coordinator can be any school staff member with good organizational skills and willingness to learn about IPM. The choice for IPM coordinator depends on the organization of your school system. In larger school districts, the IPM coordinator may be a district-level staff member or administrator, such as the facilities manager, the head custodian, the business manager, or a health and safety officer. In smaller school systems and individual schools, the IPM coordinator may be a custodian, the principal, the school nurse, a teacher, or other school staff.

A successful program depends on having someone who can manage the team and who is empowered to take action. This includes authority to interact with district-level administration, school staff, students, and parents, and to make budget recommendations. Note the IPM coordinator does not have to be a pest management expert; support is available from a variety of sources.

The coordinator may be responsible for most of the day-to-day program operation or may simply coordinate others who share those responsibilities. However, it is essential that the coordinator ensures that all necessary information is communicated and that all necessary activities are completed in a timely manner. The IPM program will fail if no one takes responsibility, but it also requires the support and cooperation of administration and the other school staff.

**Functions of the IPM Coordinator**

Most of the daily IPM routine is shared among program participants who are organized into the IPM Team. The IPM coordinator is a team manager and leader. Team members address specific portions of the IPM plan. For example, administrative staff might copy and disseminate the Action Packets and notification letters or summarize data from inspection sheets, a custodian is trained to inspect for indoor pests, groundskeepers monitor athletic fields, the school nurse maintains SDS sheets, etc. The individual and team responsibilities are determined by the IPM Advisory Committee. The coordinator ensures all tasks remain on track. The primary responsibilities of the IPM coordinator are:

**Leadership**

The IPM coordinator leads an “IPM Team” comprised of all school staff members with IPM responsibilities. The coordinator encourages a sense of shared responsibility and cooperation among team members, provides team members with the IPM Action Packets to direct their activities, and coordinates implementation of the IPM plan.

**Emergency Response**

Whether it is pest or pesticide related, the IPM coordinator is prepared to take appropriate measures in emergency situations. This individual determines if and when outside professional assistance is needed and coordinates pest management actions.

**Key Authority**

The IPM Coordinator disseminates IPM information, handles pest complaints, and communicates IPM issues and status to school administration, staff, students, parents, and the press.

**Start-Up Hints**

Gather the following information to make starting an IPM program easier:

 Get a map or blueprint of the school.

 Count the number of staff and their job category. You will need this information to distribute checklists, etc.

 Obtain the names and contact information for any outside contractors the school uses, such as vending machine suppliers, trash disposal, building maintenance, or pest control professionals.

 Set up a filing system for all the paperwork you will generate. Keep it in a convenient location.

 Set up a location for turning in checklists.

 Set up an IPM area at your school where staff members can access information at their leisure. This is also a great place to post important reminders and communicate with your staff when something comes up.

Remember, implementing an IPM program is an ongoing process, not an overnight miracle. Be patient. Stay consistent, be organized, and never forget that you are doing something important for the staff and students at your school.