



# AgBrief

## Integrated Pest Management in Schools

MDA Pesticide Regulation Section, March 2013

### Integrated Pest Management in Public Schools & on School Grounds

**T**here's more than one way to kill a pest, and some pests surely need to be killed — like ticks and stinging insects near schools that can cause diseases, allergic reactions and painful bites; or pests that can cause structural damage to buildings and facilities.

**Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** uses several effective methods that work together to combat the economic damage and health risks caused by pests. IPM pro-actively establishes permanent pest control practices that prevent pest problems from occurring, rather than battling a problem that already exists. Unlike traditional pest control programs, IPM cannot be used intermittently to solve a pest problem. To be effective over the long-term, IPM must be a continuing effort to manage the environment where pests live – or could live – in the future.

**Since 1999, Maryland law has required public schools to develop IPM plans for pest control both inside schools and on school grounds.** MDA's Pesticide Regulation Section provides technical assistance to public schools across the state to help them develop and implement these plans to control pests in school.

#### IPM methods and practices include the following:

- **Monitoring.** Tracking pests by using traps, visual inspections, and interviewing staff help to identify a pest and determine if a pest problem exists, the location and size of the infestation, and conditions that may contribute to the problems.



- **Sanitation and structural repair.** Pest problems can often be prevented by maintaining proper sanitation, reducing clutter, and performing small repairs that keep pests out. This can prevent an infestation by denying the pest the food, water and shelter it needs to survive.
- **Communication.** Training and educational programs for staff and students on subjects such as pest identification, biology, and sanitation help promote successful results.
- **Record keeping.** By recording data on pest numbers and observations on housekeeping and structural deficiencies, school staff can help alert the pest management technician of potential problems between scheduled services.
- **Pest control without pesticides.** IPM practices such as trapping, screening, caulking, vacuuming, steam cleaning and power washing are safe and effective long-term pest control methods.
- **Pest control with pesticides.** Pesticides may be necessary to control pest infestations in schools, but only after non-chemical methods fail and as a last resort.
- **Program evaluation.** IPM practices and procedures are continually adopted and modified based on an evaluation of past experience, results, and knowledge gained over time.



- **Quality Assurance.** Whether provided by in-house or contracted pest control personnel, objective, on-going evaluation, oversight and review are critical to maintaining an effective IPM program.

### Notification of Pesticide Applications

Parents, guardians and staff in all public elementary, middle and high schools where pesticides are applied to school buildings or grounds must be notified prior to application or shortly thereafter if it is done on a weekend or on an emergency basis.

Pesticides can only be applied without prior notification if an emergency pest situation exists, like stinging pests. However, the school must notify the parents, guardians and school staff members within 24 hours of the application or on the next school day. Only a certified applicator or a registered employee, working under the supervision of a certified applicator, may apply a pesticide in a school building or on school grounds.

### For more information:

Each school system designates a contact person who keeps information on the IPM program, pest control practices and pesticide application at that school.

**Parents, guardians or staff people with questions about a specific school** should contact the IPM Program Contact with questions about their school's program.

**For general and technical information about IPM, visit:** [http://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Pages/Integrated-Pest-Management-\(IPM\)-in-Schools.aspx](http://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Pages/Integrated-Pest-Management-(IPM)-in-Schools.aspx)



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