

PRESENT:

GREEN PEST MANAGEMENT: A PROPERTY MANAGER'S CHECKLIST

How green is your building?

If you haven't thought about it, there's no time like the present. Increasingly, commercial property managers are "going green" – a trend that helps improve human and environmental health and conserves water and energy.

How does pest control fit in?

A relatively easy way to make your building greener is to reduce the environmental impact of your facility's indoor pest control efforts. Use this five-step checklist to be sure your pest management program is environmentally friendly:

Use IPM to prevent pests while reducing reliance on chemical pesticides.

Rather than simply treating for pest problems when they occur, true IPM programs take a more preventive approach, identifying the reasons that pests infest properties – most likely because the pests can find food, water and shelter – and eliminating those conditions wherever possible. This proactive, ongoing approach helps reduce the need for pesticides and reactive treatments.

Be sure your IPM policy stipulates the following:

- Integrated methods: Effective non-chemical techniques include improved sanitation, structural maintenance, mechanical controls (e.g., trapping) and living biological controls (e.g., using a natural enemy of the pest to reduce pest population).
- Regular, ongoing pest inspections: Pay special attention to your building's "hot spots," or the areas most likely to attract pests (i.e. near doors and windows, under HVAC units, high-traffic zones).
- Pest population tracking: Regularly check traps and monitoring stations to keep track of how your IPM program is affecting pest activity in the building.

What is IPM?

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an environmentally friendly approach to pest control that emphasizes the reasons why pests infest your building in the first place. IPM uses physical and mechanical, non-chemical solutions to prevent and manage pest problems. IPM makes chemical treatments a last resort through an ongoing cycle of inspection, removing pest-friendly conditions, monitoring for pest presence and documenting pest and pest control activity.



IPM relies first on non-chemical measures to keep pests out, like identifying and repairing cracks and crevices in the building's façade.

Set clear guidelines for pesticide use and product selection.

Only use pesticides if nontoxic options (e.g., sanitation, structural repairs, mechanical traps) are unreasonable or have been exhausted – and then choose a least toxic pesticide (see sidebar).

Notify tenants of your property's IPM plan.

Keep your tenants in the loop on your program so they can support your efforts. Tenant notice should include a description of the IPM program and a list of all pesticides, including any least-toxic pesticide that may be used in the building as part of the IPM program; the name, address, and telephone number of the contact person of the building; and a statement that the contact person maintains the product label and material safety data sheet (MSDS) of each pesticide used by the building, that the label or MSDS is available for review upon request, and that the contact person is available for information and comment.

Notify tenants of certain pesticide treatments.

Your IPM plan should provide for "Universal Notification," which requires tenant notification no less than 72 hours before a pesticide other than a least toxic pesticide (see sidebar) is applied in a building or on surrounding grounds that the building maintains. The plan should address the circumstances under which an emergency pesticide application can be conducted without complying with the notifications provisions (See sample language below). In addition, the IPM plan must outline notification strategies to ensure that occupants and janitorial workers are notified 24 hours in advance of the pesticide application.

Sample Emergency Notification Waiver Language

"If a pest problem poses an immediate threat to human health and no viable alternative to pesticides exists to address the pest problem, the IPM plan may deviate from the notification provisions, adhering to any applicable local or state regulations and selecting the most appropriate product(s) available."

What Are "Least Toxic" Pesticides? U.S. EPA Definitions

Least Toxic Options Include:

Boric acid, silica gels, diatomaceous earth, nonvolatile insect and rodent baits in tamper resistant containers, microbe-based insecticides, biological controls, and botanical insecticides (not including synthetic pyrethroids) without toxic synergists.

Least Toxic Options Do Not Include:

1. Pesticides determined by EPA to be possible, probable, or known carcinogens, mutagens, teratogens, reproductive toxins, developmental neurotoxins, endocrine disrupters, or immune system toxins;
2. Pesticides in EPA's toxicity category I or II;
3. Any application of a pesticide using a broadcast spray, dust, tenting, fogging or baseboard spray application.



A green IPM program allows for the careful application of least toxic pesticides in certain circumstances, but they should always be applied to targeted areas like cracks and crevices.

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For more tips on non-chemical pest control, watch "The ABCs of Pest Habitat Modification" on Orkin University Online (<http://www.orkincommercial.com/about/university.asp>).