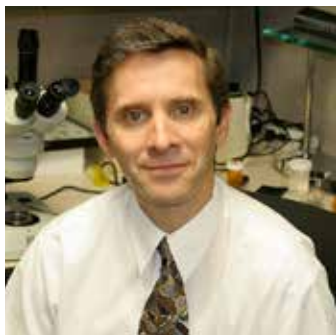


Integrated Pest Management: Encouraging Pests to Find Shelter Elsewhere This Summer



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August has arrived, which means hoteliers around the country have geared up for the peak travel season of the year. Millions of Americans, not to mention countless travelers from all around the world, are booking transportation and lodging for their vacations, searching for a comfortable hotel where they can relax. And vacationers are not the only ones seeking out hotels for a break from the heat – pests are following suit.

When temperatures rise, pest activity increases as well. To manage pest activity on your property, it is imperative to establish a robust Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. IPM goes above and beyond traditional pest management; instead of relying solely on chemicals to reactively repel or kill pests, IPM focuses on non-chemical techniques such as exclusion, sanitation and facility maintenance to help keep pests away proactively. An effective IPM plan also requires a higher standard of scientific expertise, including knowledge of pest biology, pest behavior and best practices in pest control technology. This knowledge helps to better understand why pests do what they do and in turn better prevent them.

To ensure your IPM plan is as strong as possible, be certain it includes the following:

- **Pest Management Partner:** Your relationship with your pest management provider should surpass typical vendor status. Your pest management provider should be a partner who takes the time to design an IPM program especially for your property, adjusting the plan over time as pest pressure and your pest control needs evolve.
- **Staff Empowerment:** Work with your pest management provider to host an IPM training for your staff, as they are your eyes and ears and are often the first to see pest problems around the property. By hosting an IPM training, your staff will gain an understanding of your IPM program and their role in preventing and controlling pest activity at your hotel.
- **Non-Chemical Prevention:** Exclusion and facility maintenance should play major roles in your IPM program to help prevent pests from entering the building. Common techniques include sealing all cracks and crevices with weather-resistant caulking, closing any holes on exterior walls, adding weather stripping around windows and installing door sweeps to limit gaps under doors. You may also consider mounting air curtains and working with an HVAC professional to ensure there is positive airflow at doors that pushes pests away from entrances.

- **Sanitation Regimen:** Sanitation is an important component of IPM that helps manage pest activity. Work with your pest management provider to establish a stringent sanitation regimen that covers indoor and outdoor areas. Inside, keep food covered in continental breakfast buffet areas and otherwise stored in airtight containers. Clean spills and crumbs immediately. Outdoors, inspect the grounds and parking lots frequently to look for trash or standing water that can attract pests. Consider using an organic cleaner to break down the malodorous molecules that create pest-attracting odors in your dumpster, which should also be placed as far away from the building as possible.
- **Chemicals as a last resort:** While IPM focuses on proactive prevention instead of reactive chemical use, some pest issues may require targeted use of chemicals. Your IPM partner should only use chemicals when all other proactive, non-chemical-based methods have been exhausted. After the targeted treatment, your partner should follow up with non-chemical methods and monitor the program for effectiveness.
- Trimming vegetation and tree branches and removing any dead or diseased plants or limbs to create an 18-inch buffer around your building's perimeter.
- Inspecting door sweeps, weather stripping and window screens to ensure they are in good condition throughout the hotel.
- Sealing all cracks and crevices on exterior walls of your hotel to prevent ants from slipping in unnoticed.
- Cleaning all food and drink spills as soon as possible both indoors and outdoors as the debris and residues are an attractant to ants and other pests.

Now that you have a basic understanding of IPM, here are more specific tips regarding two common summer pests: ants and mosquitoes.

Ants are often considered the most annoying pests because they can pose health risks and cause structural damage. Their tendency to colonize in high populations also makes them incredibly difficult to manage. If you have an active ant infestation, work with your pest management provider to identify the species of ant on your property. Correct identification of the ant is vital, as the treatment program is fully dependent on the species. However, you shouldn't wait until you see ant activity to manage the situation – there are plenty of ways you can proactively prevent ants from coming in your buildings, including:



Mosquitoes are not only annoying; they pose serious health threats to your guests. Mosquito bites can be dangerous because they are capable of transmitting West Nile virus, Dengue fever and the recently discovered Chikungunya virus, along with other conditions that cause encephalitis, or swelling of the brain. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2013, more than 2,300 cases of West Nile virus were reported in 48 states.

Ways to help protect your guests from mosquitoes include:

- Removing any sources of standing water, such as gutters, birdbaths and plant pots— mosquitoes only need 2 to 3 inches of water to breed.
- Inspecting window screens to ensure they fit tightly and have no holes.
- Installing automatic doors at entrances to your hotel, and using double doors at the busiest entryways.

- Treating breeding sites (and sometimes vegetation) around the property. This can significantly reduce mosquito populations.

By establishing a robust IPM plan and following these tips to proactively prevent ants and mosquitoes or, you will help ensure your hotel is ready to give a warm welcome to visitors this summer – and show the door to pesky pests.

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Maintenance Tip:

Bed Bugs are the bane of the hospitality industry's existence. These transient pests can make their way room to room on your guests' luggage, their clothes and even their bodies all year long. Miss just one female bed bug and your hotel can become infested with more than 300 adults and 1,000 eggs in just three months. These pests will not only irritate your guests, but will quickly tarnish your hard-earned reputation. Here are a few tips for spotting activity:

- Bed bugs are nocturnal and difficult to spot during daytime hours. Inform your staff to be on the lookout for tiny ink-like stains or molting skins on mattress tags and seams, between or beneath furniture cushions and behind headboards during their daily routines.

If you spot a bed bug or signs of activity, your pest management provider may advise you to take the following steps:

- Move loose furniture like desks and chairs into the center of the room and turn them over.
- Keep the conditions of the room the same as



when signs were spotted – do not adjust the temperature or attempt to clean the room.

- Remove any items from the walls and place in the center of the room.

Lastly, your pest management provider may recommend a few different service options to clear the area of bed bugs. This may include vacuuming, heat treatments and/or targeted residual treatments. To ensure the bed bugs haven't traveled to adjoining rooms, your pest management provider may recommend DNA testing or a canine inspection to determine if the infestation has moved outside of the initial room.