

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Quality Self-Assessment

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At a Glance . . .

- Integrated pest management (IPM) is an approach that emphasizes nonchemical pest prevention, focusing on facility maintenance and sanitation before considering chemical options for pest management.
- This 10-question IPM self-assessment is designed to help individuals and facilities better understand the pest management processes used in their environments.
- When you're finished with the questionnaire, use the score sheet to see where you stand on a 50-point scale of IPM quality.

An Introduction to IPM

It doesn't matter what industry you work in—pests don't discriminate when it comes to where they take up residence. Since pests can carry and spread disease, as well as potentially cause damage to properties, it's important to understand the elements of an effective pest control program.

Pest management providers help their customers manage pests, protect staff and customers, and prevent pest activity in an environmentally responsible way. Called integrated pest management (IPM), this approach emphasizes nonchemical pest prevention and focuses on facility maintenance and sanitation, before considering chemical options.

Orkin created an IPM quality self-assessment tool to help facilities and individuals better understand the pest management processes used in their environments. If you work in an industry where pest management is a crucial part of doing business, you can treat this self-assessment as one more step that contributes to your overall efforts. Use it in conjunction with all initiatives related to quality, safety, and enterprise risk.

However, keep in mind that anyone can use the self-assessment as a way to become more involved and make informed decisions with the help of a pest management professional. You can even incorporate it into your 5S (sort, straighten, shine, standardize, sustain) routine to help maintain a quality working environment.

Upon completing the assessment, you'll have an idea of the next steps you, your clients, suppliers, and other key partners should take to develop and foster an effective IPM program.

References for Further Reading

- ASQ Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Division, *The Certified HACCP Auditor Handbook*, Quality Press, 2007.
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- ReVelle, Jack B., "Five S (5S) Tutorial," ASQ.org.
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- Udell, Mark, and Mike Buffington, "Eradicating Inconsistency," *Quality Progress*, March 2012, pp. 38-44.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Principles," *Pesticides: Topical & Chemical Fact Sheets*, May 9, 2012, <http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/factsheets/ipm.htm>.
- Windsor, Sam, *An Introduction to Green Process Management*, Quality Press, 2011.



IPM Quality Self-Assessment

1. **At your facility, do you implement a pest management program that focuses more on controlling pest problems as they happen, or on preventing pest problems before they occur?**
 - a) Controlling pest problems as they happen.
 - b) Preventing pest problems before they occur.
2. **Have you and your pest management professional held an integrated pest management (IPM) training session with your staff?**
 - a) Yes.
 - b) No.
3. **Do you implement exclusion methods (e.g., sealing cracks and crevices, installing weather-stripping, replacing window screens, maintaining positive air pressure) proactively at your facility to control pests?**
 - a) Yes, we do this proactively.
 - b) Yes, we implement these methods, but only reactively.
 - c) No, we do not use these methods at all.
4. **Which of the following best describes your facility's reliance on chemical pesticides to help control pest activity?**
 - a) Chemical pesticides are used regularly to control pests.
 - b) Chemical pesticides are used occasionally to control certain pests.
 - c) Chemical pesticides are a last resort, starting with least toxic products (have an approved list).
 - d) Chemical pesticides are never used to control pests.
5. **Have you created a written sanitation plan that provides guidelines on routine inspections and cleaning areas that are vulnerable to pests?**
 - a) Yes.
 - b) No.
6. **How often are the most vulnerable areas of the facility cleaned?**
 - a) Every day.
 - b) Once a week.
 - c) Once a month.
 - d) I'm not sure.
7. **Do you keep your pest control service documentation on-site? The documentation should include pest activity log, corrective action reports, pesticide usage data, bait/trap maps, and dates of service.**
 - a) Yes, all of the above.
 - b) Yes, a few of the above.
 - c) No, none of the above.
8. **Are your staff members evaluated on their activities (e.g., sanitation, documentation, implementation of exclusion strategies) that help prevent pest activity?**
 - a) Yes.
 - b) No.
9. **Is your pest management professional evaluated on his or her compliance with IPM standards, either by the pest control company or external auditing agency?**
 - a) Yes.
 - b) No.
10. **If you see evidence of pest activity at your facility, how quickly do you communicate it to your pest management professional?**
 - a) I communicate the information on the same day of discovering the evidence.
 - b) I communicate the information within the same week or month of discovering the evidence.
 - c) I never communicate the information.



Score Sheet

Now that you've completed the self-assessment, use this score sheet to add up your points and see where you stand on IPM quality.

1. **At your facility, do you implement a pest management program that focuses more on controlling pest problems as they happen, or on preventing pest problems before they occur?**

Effective pest management programs take a proactive approach to help prevent pest problems before they begin.

- a) 0
- b) 5

2. **Have you and your pest management professional held an integrated pest management (IPM) training session with your staff?**

IPM training sessions help ensure staff members have an understanding of the roles they play in the facility's pest management program.

- a) 5
- b) 0

3. **Do you implement exclusion methods (e.g., sealing cracks and crevices, installing weather-stripping, replacing window screens, maintaining positive air pressure) proactively at your facility to control pests?**

Exclusion and other facility maintenance methods used on an ongoing basis can help keep pests out of your facility.

- a) 5
- b) 3
- c) 0

4. **Which of the following best describes your facility's reliance on chemical pesticides to help control pest activity?**

Effective IPM programs call for the use of every nonchemical strategy available before chemical treatments are even considered as a last resort.

- a) 0
- b) 3
- c) 4
- d) 5

5. **Have you created a written sanitation plan that provides guidelines on routine inspections and cleaning areas that are vulnerable to pests?**

Detailed, written sanitation plans should be included as a component of the IPM program to help prevent pests by restricting their access to food and water.

- a) 5
- b) 0

6. **How often are the most vulnerable areas of the facility cleaned?**

The most vulnerable areas of your facility should be cleaned as often as possible to prevent pest problems from becoming established in hard-to-see and hard-to-reach areas.

- a) 5
- b) 4
- c) 3
- d) 0

7. **Do you keep your pest control service documentation on-site? The documentation should include pest activity log, corrective action reports, pesticide usage data, bait/trap maps, and dates of service.**

Third-party food safety auditors require all of the above reports and documentation to be housed at your facility. Otherwise, points are deducted from the pest management portion of the audit, which can be worth up to 20 percent of the total audit score.

- a) 5
- b) 3
- c) 0



Scoring Information

8. **Are your staff members evaluated on their activities (e.g., sanitation, documentation, implementation of exclusion strategies) that help prevent pest activity?**
IPM programs are dependent upon the sanitation, facility maintenance, and documentation activities that your staff handles on a daily basis, so employee performance should be evaluated periodically.

a) 5
b) 0

9. **Is your pest management professional evaluated on his or her compliance with IPM standards, either by the pest control company or external auditing agency?**
To ensure your IPM program is implemented in an effective manner, your pest management professional should be evaluated periodically by the pest control company or an external auditing agency.

a) 5
b) 0

10. **If you see evidence of pest activity at your facility, how quickly do you communicate it to your pest management professional?**
It's imperative that pest activity is communicated to the pest management professional immediately to determine which corrective actions should be taken.

a) 5
b) 3
c) 0

35–50 points

Expert in IPM Quality – You have an outstanding IPM program. Keep it up though, because pests can sneak inside when you become complacent. Consider holding a comprehensive review with your pest management professional to pinpoint specific areas of improvement in your current IPM plan.

16–34 points

Proficient in IPM Quality – You are on the right track, but you can still work on making your IPM program as effective as it could be. Consider speaking with your pest management professional about how you can increase your involvement and play a more proactive role in your current IPM plan.

0–15 points

Novice in IPM Quality – You have some work to do to create an effective IPM program. Consider scheduling a meeting with a pest management professional who can develop a customized program for your facility and also help you to become more knowledgeable about IPM.

About the Author

Zia Siddiqi is director of quality systems at Orkin. With nearly 30 years' experience in the field of pest and pathogen control, he has studied urban, industrial, and agricultural pests, and designed pest control programs in numerous countries. A board-certified entomologist (B.C.E.), he has a Ph.D. in entomology.

Previously, Dr. Siddiqi was North American technical director for PRISM Pest Elimination in the United States and PCO Services in Canada (both S.C. Johnson Professional companies). He obtained ISO 9001 certification for each company's pest management programs.

