



San Mateo Countywide
Stormwater Pollution
Prevention Program
www.flowstobay.org

LESS TOXIC PEST CONTROL – Changing the Way of Controlling Pests

Are you aware that offering less toxic ways to treat unwanted pests is not only beneficial for the environment but also for your business? Environmental factors, growing customer demand, and increasing regulatory requirements are reasons why a growing number of professional pest control applicators are favoring less toxic pest control practices known as **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**. The following provides information about why it may be profitable for your pest control business to offer alternative and less toxic pest control strategies.



What is IPM?

IPM is an alternative, less toxic way of controlling pests. Unlike many conventional methods, IPM does not rely on a predetermined schedule for pest control treatments. Instead, IPM relies on regular monitoring to establish treatment methods and evaluation to determine outcome of treatment actions. To minimize pesticide usage, IPM relies on the following methods:

- Cultural controls (e.g. restricting access to food, water, and/or shelter)
- Physical controls (e.g. use of mechanical traps to capture pests)
- Biological controls (e.g. natural predators)

- Chemical controls (e.g. baiting or other pesticides with low toxicity to people and pets)

If less toxic methods are used in a controlled and integrated manner, they can not only effectively control pests, but also reduce pollution associated with this source. More information on IPM can be obtained from the Bio-Integral Resource Center (BIRC) at <http://www.birc.org/> or from the Pest Control Operators of California's website at <http://www.pcoc.org/ipm/index.cfm>.

Environmental Factors

Many local and regional studies have shown that a major source of stormwater pollution is the traditional use of pesticides to control unwanted pests in and around buildings. During a rainstorm, pesticides applied around structures are washed off treated surfaces and carried into storm drains. From there, this runoff flows directly, without treatment to the nearest creek, which ultimately carries the water to the San Francisco Bay, or the ocean. Pesticides carried with stormwater into creeks, the Bay, or ocean are not only harmful to fish and other aquatic life but also to human health.



Customers want less toxic products

Customers in recent years have become increasingly aware of the environmental impacts associated with pesticide use. To reduce pesticide exposures, the public is gradually looking for alternative, less toxic methods to control pests. For example, Mitchell Harper, the owner of Greencrew in Los Altos, has found that the idea of providing less toxic yard maintenance

services has really taken off¹. Concerns about the environment, health, and well being of pets are some of the key reasons his customers choose less toxic pest control practices.

Regulations

In addition to environmental issues and growing customer demand, increasing regulatory requirements also encourage using less toxic pest control practices such as IPM. For example, to minimize exposure to toxic chemicals, the Healthy Schools Act 2000 requires schools to implement least toxic pest control methods. At the municipality level, most of the local agencies in San Mateo County have adopted IPM policies that require municipality contractors to comply with their IPM policies and to provide evidence of current IPM training.



The San Mateo Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (STOPPP) was created in 1993 to assist municipalities in San Mateo County to comply with the municipal stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. One major goal of this program is to educate the public and businesses about how to prevent stormwater pollution. For additional information on how your business can play a key partnership role in preventing water pollution, visit STOPPP's website at www.flowstobay.org.

¹ PCO Media Pitch prepared by BASMAA/BACWA Media Relations Committee in May 2004

Additional Resources

San Mateo Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program:
www.flowstobay.org, *Pollution Prevention Practices for Businesses*

San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
Phone: (650) 363 4700 email:
Email: smateoag@co.sanmateo.ca.us

California School IPM – Department of Pesticide Regulation:
www.cdpr.ca.gov/cfdocs/apps/schoolipm/pco/main.cfm?crumbs_list=1,9,14, *Pesticide Laws & Regulations, School IPM Manuals and Training*

San Mateo County Household Hazardous Waste:
www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/smc/department/home/0,,1954_187544_187788,00.htm

San Mateo County Mosquito Abatement District: www.smcmad.org

Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program - UC IPM on Line:
www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/selectnewpest.home.html, *guidelines for alternative pest management around homes*

Bio-Integral Resource Center (BIRC)
www.birc.org/index.html, *IPM solutions for urban and agricultural pest problems*

Our Water Our World (OWOW)
www.ourwaterourworld.org/, *IPM fact sheets, less toxic products, and Participating IPM Partnership Stores*

The IPM Institute of North America -
www.ipminstitute.org/, *IPM Standards, and Certifications*



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LESS TOXIC PEST CONTROL SERVICES



The Benefits of Including Alternative Pest Control Practices