

Helpful Hints for Managing Your Structural Pest Control Contract

Helpful Hints

- **Establish Policy and Hire a Competent IPM Contractor**
 - Establish an IPM policy or ordinance.
 - Hire a competent IPM contractor. An *IPM certified* contractor is best because they must operate under known standards.
 - Make sure that the contractor understands that you have an IPM policy in place—provide them with a copy.
 - Make sure the contractor understands that you prefer pests to be managed with as little pesticide as possible and that you are looking to them to come up with alternative solutions.
 - Make sure the contractor understands that you prefer the use of baits and traps over sprays.
 - Make sure that the contractor knows that if a pesticide is needed, you prefer the least toxic pesticide, and that you want them to avoid the use of pesticides the Regional Water Quality Control Board has identified as causing water quality problems (organophosphates, carbamates, pyrethroids, and fipronil).
- **Commit Funds**
 - Agencies need to set realistic budgets for pest management. The number one reason for poor service is not paying enough for that service.
 - The amount an agency pays for pest control will be small compared to the amount it spends on maintenance and sanitation; therefore, don't try to cut corners on pest control.
- **Commit Staff**
 - Designate an IPM coordinator. It will be difficult to have a successful program without someone to oversee it. The IPM Coordinator is a problem solver as well as an IPM educator.
 - Think about establishing an IPM committee to involve staff in decisions and enhance communication. This can pre-empt negative perceptions of the program.
- **Commit Time**
 - The first year or so will take energy and focus to get the program going. Later, as your staff and your contractor become knowledgeable about how your agency's IPM program works, it will take less of your time.
- **Establish Communication**
 - Keep in close touch with your contractor.
 - Make sure that you have a good system to communicate pest problems to the contractor. Have a main contact and perhaps designated contacts in certain departments or facilities to relay requests for service to the contractor. Individual employees should not be allowed to call the contractor directly.
 - Let your contractor know that you understand that structural IPM is a partnership and that you want to work with them to manage pests. Tell them that you will complete as many of the repairs that they suggest as your budget allows. Ask them to prioritize repairs for you, so you can use your money and time wisely.
 - Communicate with peers at other agencies to get advice about how they may have solved similar problems and about new things they are trying.
 - Encourage cross-departmental communication about collective goals for the year ahead and about what has worked and what hasn't.
- **Recognize and Celebrate Accomplishments**
 - It is very important to thank the people directly responsible for pest control for their specific contributions and to help them start seeing themselves as IPM champions.

- **Educate Staff**
 - Make sure that employees and building occupants understand that you have an IPM policy and that prevention (e.g., storing food in rodent-proof containers, keeping food waste in only one or two receptacles in the building, not eating at their desks, etc.) is going to be a big part of pest management now.
 - Educate staff and building occupants in the process for reporting a pest problem.
 - Explain to employees and occupants that they will not be allowed to bring pesticides from home to use in the workplace. You may have to institute new policies and make sure they are followed.
 - Provide building managers and staff with information about how to avoid pest problems. This will save you money with your contractor. Be aware, though, that staff will be most receptive to information when they are actually experiencing a pest problem.
 - Sometimes educating staff will involve soothing people's fears of creepy-crawlies and gently helping them to understand that not all creatures are a threat and that eradicating all pests is not the goal.
- **Determine a baseline for the numbers of complaints about pests and the amount and type of pesticides used before the IPM program took effect.**

Communications You Should Be Receiving from Your Contractor

- Detailed information about and a prioritization of repairs that need to be done to improve pest management
- Detailed information about behaviors that are encouraging or exacerbating pest problems and what can be done to alleviate the behavior. Ask your contractor for printed matter to help change behavior.
- Alerts about unusual pest problems and their possible solutions—you should be making the decision on what to do, with their help
- Labels and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for pesticides the company plans to use
- Regular pesticide use reports—you will need to decide how frequently you want to receive these, in what format, and what information you need. At a minimum you will need the name of the target pest, date and location of application, the name of the product used, the EPA registration # for the product, the active ingredient name, and the % of active ingredient in the product.
- Regular reports on non-chemical management, such as number and kind of devices used for monitoring or trapping and for which pests, number of service visits that resulted only in education of occupants or non-chemical management, exclusion work done, etc.

Some of the Benefits of IPM

- Being an example to the businesses and residents of your city and county, and sending a message consistent with your IPM outreach to residents
- Better pest control because you are emphasizing prevention and long term solutions
- More satisfied employees and building occupants
- Fewer call-backs
- Once the program is going, less time and energy to oversee structural pest management
- Less risk to the agency due to fewer complaints from the public and employees, and less pesticide use
- Being in compliance with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's regulations in the MRP