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No. 2

PEST CONTROL AND SANITATION - WHAT CAN I DO ?

An effective Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program must have the cooperation of the entire school staff including teachers, nurses, food service workers, custodial staff and administration. All of these people need to know basic concepts of integrated pest management and how they are utilized to control pest problems within schools.

STUDENTS AND STAFF

The most important assistance that staff and students can give to an effective IPM program is through the use of sanitation. Many of the pest problems in schools can be reduced, or even prevented from occurring, if students and staff ensure that proper sanitation practices are followed. The more cooperation that is received from these parties the better the results achieved by the IPM program.

Some areas that receive special attention due to their susceptibility for pest problems include coffee and snack areas, staff lounges, refrigerators and microwaves, vending machines, mop closets, trash cans, desks and lockers.

Students can help prevent pest problems by:

- Cleaning up leftover food
- Not leaving food in lockers
- Not placing gum under desks
- Removing paper clutter
- Keeping food and beverages in designated areas
- Reporting pests, when noticed, to teachers

Staff can help in the prevention of pest problems by:

- Leaving pest control and pest management to trained professionals
- Not moving sticky traps or other pest monitoring devices
- Not propping open windows or screens
- Removing trash, especially trash that contains food

- Keeping areas dry by removing standing water and items that are wet or have been damaged by water
- Storing animal feed in tightly sealed containers, cleaning up spills immediately and cleaning cages on a regular basis
- Keeping instructional food items, such as dried beans used for math exercises, in tightly sealed containers
- Keeping refrigerators, vending machines and microwaves clean and free of spills at all times
- Avoiding the use of shelf paper
- Discarding any infested materials or food items

PARENTS

It is just as important to receive the same commitment from parents, since they also play an important role in the effectiveness of the pest management program in schools. IPM programs and the people providing these services need the support of parents. Parents should be aware of the pest management programs being utilized at their children's school.

Parents can help in the prevention of pest problems by:

- Encouraging children to lend a hand in cleaning up.
- Discouraging children from keeping food in their lockers and desks.

IPM is a way to help insure a clean and safe school building for students. Additional information on pest management programs within the school system can be obtained by contacting school administrators.

SUMMARY

The foundation of an effective pest management program is good sanitation. Trash disposal and sound structural maintenance also play important roles in an IPM program. Staff and students must understand how their actions can increase or decrease pest problems in the school. With a combined effort by school administrators, staff, students, parents, and the pest control specialist to incorporate the following practices, many pest problems can be avoided within the school.

- Clean up spills immediately
- Store all food items in tightly sealed containers
- Wrap or bag food waste before disposal
- Remove trash, and
- Not keep food items in lockers and desks

Through the use of these practices, pest problems can often be eliminated before they ever occur. An inhospitable environment is created for the pest by depriving it of food, water and harborage needed for its survival. Further information on integrated pest management in schools can be obtained from the Maryland Department of Agriculture's IPM Leaflet No. 1, "Integrated Pest Management - What Is It?".

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