

IPM For The IMP

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As a maintenance professional, you know that for every preventive maintenance measure you take, you save dollars, time, and headaches in the long-run. Your pest management program is no different. By implementing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, you can help prevent disease-carrying pests from ever entering your facility, reducing possible product contamination and destruction, lost profits, or negative media attention.

An environmentally-friendly approach to pest management, IPM programs help prevent pests using a combination of non-chemical solutions, many of which you may already have in place. IPM relies on chemical treatments as a last resort, and only then in the least volatile form. IPM can be broken down into three overarching stages.

Assess

A pest management professional trained in pest biology and behavior should do a thorough walk-through of your facility's interior and exterior in order to assess any current pest issues as well as vulnerabilities that could welcome pests. Signs of current pest problems include droppings, cast skins, and, of course, the pests themselves. Vulnerabilities can include facility maintenance issues such as gaps around doors and windows, cracks and crevices in walls, and unsealed openings around outdoor utility penetrations. Cockroaches only need 1/16 of an inch to enter your facility, while mice can enter through a dime-sized hole. A few common sanitation deficiencies you should be on the lookout for include infrequent waste removal, messy employee break areas, and dirty facility drains. Pests aren't picky about meals—even small amounts of crumbs, dust, and debris can attract insects and rodents.

Implement

Once you've assessed the situation with a pest management professional, it's time to implement a customized plan for your facility. IPM first looks to non-chemical alternatives to prevent and treat pest problems. This aspect of IPM can help you reach your sustainability initiatives and qualify your property for certain certification programs like the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (www.usgbc.org). Common non-chemical IPM tactics include:



- Sealing holes, cracks, and crevices with weather resistant sealant to prevent insects and rodents from crawling through.
- Installing plastic door strips near entrances and exits to prevent flying insects from entering along with staff and shipments.
- Installing fly lights, which attract flies with ultraviolet light to a non-toxic sticky trap near entrances and exits.
- Working with your waste management company to clean and rotate dumpsters frequently.
- Using an organic drain cleaner to eliminate the “bio-film” flies feed on and breed in.
- Thoroughly cleaning under dock plates in loading zones to eliminate food sources for insects and rodents.
- Should chemical treatments be necessary, targeted treatments are preferred versus broad-based spray applications. Chemical treatments should only be applied by a licensed applicator—this includes gel baits and insect growth regulators that inhibit pests from reaching full maturity and breeding.

Document & Communicate

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An ongoing cycle, true IPM programs are monitored, documented, and adjusted accordingly. If you work in an audited facility, documentation is key come audit time, so make sure your IPM program incorporates the following documentation:

- Service Report—Notes any observed pest activity and actions taken.
- Inspection Report—Notes any sanitation or structural conditions observed and addressed.
- Trend Data—Tracks pest trends such as times and places of heightened pest activity.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and Pesticide Usage Logs—If pesticides must be used, they must be recorded and kept along with the MSDS stating the pesticides' trade name and active ingredient.
- Site Diagram—A detailed site diagram showing the location of all pest control devices. All indoor and outdoor control devices should be numbered and represented on the layout map.

In order for an IPM program to succeed, there must be open and continuous dialogue between the pest management professional, facility management, and staff. Work with your pest management professional to train your staff on identifying pest signs and reporting any pest activity. Employees on the ground-level of your operations are the eyes and ears of your IPM program, alerting you to any pest problems early on. Working together you'll make the steps of IPM as easy as ABC.

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