



# PENNSYLVANIA LAW REQUIRES IPM IN SCHOOL AND CHILDCARE FACILITIES

A FACTSHEET FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA IPM PROGRAM

All public and charter schools, and childcare facilities in Pennsylvania are required by law (PA Acts 35 & 36 and the Pennsylvania Pesticide Control Act of 1973) to use Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The law aims to protect children and school employees from unnecessary exposure to pesticides, thus making learning environments safer.

## What is IPM?

IPM, or integrated pest management, is a safe, effective, and scientific approach to managing pests. IPM uses knowledge of pests' habits and needs to help implement pest prevention tactics first, and uses pesticides only when necessary selecting effective pesticide products that pose the least risk of exposure to people and the environment.

## Who must comply?

All Pennsylvania public school districts, charter schools, intermediate units, vocational/technical schools, and childcare facilities.

## Why?

Pests in schools can destroy property, contaminate food, bite or sting people, and worsen other health issues. For example, certain pest infestations can trigger or worsen asthma incidence, and pests can spread infectious and deadly diseases. However, routine pesticide use, particularly sprays, may lead to unacceptable chemical exposure risks. Children spend approximately 1,100 hours per year in school buildings. Kids are especially sensitive to some pesticides because of their small size and developing bodies. Parents, health care workers, and school officials are increasingly looking to reduce potential student and staff exposures to toxins in the school setting.

IPM use in schools considers the causes of pest infestations and focuses on preventative tactics. IPM provides more effective and longer-term control. IPM uses routine inspections with intervention only when necessary. Therefore, pesticide treatments, if needed, are reduced and limited to pest hot spots, or are eliminated altogether. Because IPM also seeks to reduce children's pesticide exposure, less risky products and formulations are selected. Additional benefits of IPM include more effective pest management, reduced clutter, improved cleanliness, and better energy efficiency in buildings due to proper maintenance.

## What does the Law Require?

Beginning in January 2003, the Commonwealth required all Pennsylvania public schools to:

- Adopt an IPM plan for school buildings and grounds (PA Act 35)
- Appoint an IPM coordinator and advisory committee
- Set up a proper record keeping system
- Provide notification to parents, students, and teachers 72 hours in advance of pesticide applications (PA Act 36)
- Provide for a minimum 7-hour re-entry period for common access areas whenever pesticides are applied
- Understand concepts of IPM

## What you need to know about IPM!

A good IPM plan utilizes, but is not limited to, the following tactics:

- Regular pest population monitoring
  - Keep a record of pest sightings that includes who, what, where, and when
- Good sanitation practices
- Education and monitoring of staff for proper food and trash management practices
- Improved maintenance
  - Seal and caulk cracks, crevices, and holes
  - Maintain windows, doors, and screens
  - Fix leaks in roofs, and pipes and faucets

## Resources for School IPM

For more information, contact your local Penn State Extension Educator, or the PA IPM Program at (814) 865-1895 or by email [pscip@psu.edu](mailto:pscip@psu.edu)