

Safe and Effective Pest Management in Multi-unit Housing

Spraying pesticides indoors or around the outside of buildings may get rid of some pests temporarily, but most cockroaches, fleas, and ants will remain safely hidden, and show up again in a few days. Spraying or fogging becomes a never-ending cycle that exposes residents to pesticides—without eliminating the pests.

The Healthy Buildings Pilot Program brings integrated pest management (IPM) to buildings and units that join the program. IPM is common sense way of managing pests that is safe for people, pets, and the environment. IPM prevents pests from coming indoors and limits the food, water, and shelter they need to survive.

IPM in residential buildings

In a multi-unit building, some important aspects of IPM include

- * Focusing on pest prevention using barriers to keep pests outside, good housekeeping practices, and building repairs and retrofits
- * Keeping an eye out for key pests (monitoring) so you can deal with them before their numbers increase
- * Showing residents how to identify a pest problem in the early stages and use good housekeeping techniques to address it
- * Training maintenance staff to use alternatives to spraying
- * Encouraging everyone to communicate about pest problems

What's wrong with spraying pesticides?

- * Indoors, pesticide residue builds up in dust and settles into carpeting, furniture, and toys.
- * Spraying outdoors leads to pollution of local creeks and the Bay.
- * In the long run, spraying is not effective—it only leads to more spraying.

What is IPM?

How does it work?

IPM is a team effort involving residents, building managers and owners, maintenance staff, and pest management professionals. Instead of regularly scheduled spraying, IPM prevents pest problems through cleaning, making repairs, and pest-proofing. Pesticides are used as a last resort and in the safest manner possible.



Frequently Asked Questions

What are the program's free benefits for participating buildings?

- * For participating units and common areas, one year of free pest control services addressing pests such as ants, fleas, cockroaches, mice, rats, and yellowjackets
- * A free kit containing effective pest management supplies
- * Informational materials for tenants
- * Minor building repairs that will help exclude pests such as cockroaches, ants, mice, and rats
- * Hands-on training for management and maintenance staff about IPM principles and practices
- * Documentation of the program's effectiveness at the end of the pilot



What is included in the IPM toolkit?

The Healthy Buildings Program will provide each participating building manager with an IPM toolkit, stocked with items such as cleaning tools and products, sticky insect traps for monitoring pest problems, mouse traps, roach and ant baits, and sealant for closing off pest access to buildings.

Does spraying pesticides really cause health problems?

Unfortunately, yes. Exposure to pesticides, even at low levels, can cause headaches, nausea or vomiting, dizziness, and hives. Long-term reactions can include asthma, low birth weight, birth defects, learning disabilities, cancer, and hormonal changes. Children are more susceptible to pesticide poisoning than healthy adults because their bodies and brains are still developing.

Spraying increases everyone's exposure to pesticides. Indoor levels of pesticides may be especially high because pesticides build up in the home. Babies, children, and pets make direct contact with pesticides when they crawl or play on carpeting where pesticides build up. Pesticides used indoors or tracked inside on shoes can remain in the home for months or even years.

RESOURCES

Read more about IPM approaches in California for household pests.

- * University of California Statewide IPM Program: www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/menu.house.html
- * Our Water, Our World: www.ourwaterourworld.org • Supported by local water pollution prevention agencies and participating hardware stores and garden centers

Does IPM Work?

Yes!

Studies show that when building managers and tenants work together, IPM can reduce cockroach numbers to zero —much more reliably than spraying.

Success comes from educating residents and using preventive practices such as fixing water leaks and sealing cracks and crevices.

How long does IPM take?

This is a hard question to answer, as IPM is a *process* leading to a long-term fix. You should start seeing results immediately, with the first thorough cleaning. When you catch future pest problems early and deal with them quickly, they will occur less and less often.

How much will it cost to switch to IPM?

A 2004 study by the Virginia Institute of Technology and Orkin found that IPM services cost less than spraying, sometimes by as much as 60 percent (over the course of the one-year study).

Building owners who have adopted IPM agree that it saves money in the long run. In addition to saving the recurring costs of spraying, utility bills drop when leaks are repaired and doors and windows close properly. Cleaning costs decrease when residents put more effort into housekeeping.