

Integrated Pest Management for Iowa Schools



Nonchemical Pest Management Methods In Schools

If you dislike the idea of using pesticides in your school or just want to try something else first, you may wish to explore nonchemical pest management. There are three keys to successfully implementing nonchemical pest management. You must determine the pest's (1) entry method, or how it gets into the building; (2) food, or what it eats; and (3) preferred climate, or what kind of environmental conditions it prefers. Once you know these three things, you can set about to reduce, eliminate, or change them, and your work toward controlling the pest will be much easier.

Restrict ENTRY: There are a number of ways to restrict pest entry into buildings. One familiar example is the use of screens on windows and doors. Another method is to inspect all incoming products to make sure you're not bringing insects in along with food and supplies. Other entry restriction methods include caulking openings around cable and pipe access points, installing weather stripping around doors and windows, and placing screen covers over floor drains.

Reduce the availability of FOOD: The best way to reduce the availability of food is by sanitation. Good housekeeping can go a long way toward making a building less attractive to many insects. Important steps include a good overall cleaning, regular vacuuming, daily emptying of the trash, leaving no dirty dishes in the sinks, and storing pet food in pest-proof containers.

Modify CLIMATE: Climate control methods make your school a less hospitable environment for many pests. Silverfish, booklice, and springtails are known as "moisture-loving pests" because they have definite preferences for damp areas. Your school will be less attractive to them if you repair plumbing leaks, insulate cold water pipes, and use dehumidifiers.

Climate control methods can reduce your school's chance of being attacked by wood-infesting insects. If the school was built on a crawl space, installing a vapor barrier should help to dry the wood and lower its attractiveness to insects. Carpenter ants often infest wood that has gotten wet when plumbing fixtures have leaked.

Climate control techniques can be used outdoors as well. Trimming vegetation away from the building, removing clutter, and replacing bark mulch with gravel or stone will help to deter millipedes, crickets, and earwigs.

To successfully implement nonchemical pest management in your school, remember the three keys: **ENTRY**, **FOOD**, and **CLIMATE**. Take a look around and ask yourself some questions. How are pests able to get in, what can they find to eat, and how have you provided an agreeable climate for them? Think of ways to control these factors. Some methods are effective for controlling one group of pests and some for others. Use the table to help you decide which nonchemical methods might work in your situation.

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