

County of San Mateo

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy

GOAL

The County of San Mateo (County) seeks to protect the health and safety of its employees and the general public, the environment and water quality, as well as to provide sustainable solutions for pest control, through the reduced use of pesticides on property owned or managed by the County to the maximum extent practicable.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Employees implementing pest management operations will use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques that emphasize non-pesticide alternatives where feasible and, when necessary, employ the least toxic chemicals. Preference will be given to IPM certified contractors or contractors who implement IPM. County departments and their contractors that apply pesticides will develop and maintain an active IPM Plan to ensure the long-term prevention and suppression of pest problems with minimum negative impacts on the health and safety of the community and environment. The County will track employee and contractor pesticide use and prepare an annual report summarizing pesticide use and evaluating pest control activities performed.
2. The County shall encourage pilot projects to demonstrate landscape and structural pest control alternatives, seeking to use the most recent technology, best management practices and least toxic methods for all pest control measures. Pilot projects should include an objective analysis of the effectiveness of the alternative techniques applied.
3. The County will review its purchasing procedures, contracts or service agreements with pesticide applicators and employee training practices to determine what changes can be made to support the goal of pesticide reduction and promote the purchase and use of the least harmful chemicals.
4. The County will perform educational outreach and/or support Countywide or regional efforts to educate residential and commercial pesticide users on a) goals and techniques of IPM, and b) pesticide related water quality issues.

DEFINITIONS

Pesticides are defined as: any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest. Pests can be insects, rodents and other animals, unwanted plants (weeds), bacteria or fungi. The term pesticide applies to herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, rodenticides, molluscicides and other substances used to control pests. Antimicrobial agents are not included in this definition of pesticides. In general, the intent of antimicrobial agents is to reduce or mitigate the growth or development of microbial organisms.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an ecosystem-based strategy that focuses on long-term prevention of pests or their damage through a combination of techniques such as biological control, habitat manipulation, modification of cultural practices, and use of resistant varieties. Pesticides shall be used only if the above techniques are found to be either ineffective or economically infeasible. Pesticide use shall be in accordance with established guidelines, and treatments shall be made with the goal of removing only target organisms. Pest control materials shall be selected and applied in a manner that minimizes risks to human health, beneficial and nontarget organisms, and the environment.

IPM techniques could include biological controls (e.g., ladybugs and other natural enemies or predators); physical or mechanical controls (e.g., hand labor or mowing); cultural controls (e.g., mulching, discing, or alternative plant type selection); and reduced risk chemical controls (e.g., soaps or oils).

County owned or managed property includes but is not limited to: parks and open space; golf courses; roadsides; landscaped medians; flood control channels; buildings, structures, and other outdoor property owned or managed by the County.