

State Regulations Concerning Pesticides and Integrated Pest Management in Maine Schools

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a pesticide?

- A pesticide is any natural or man-made chemical product that claims to kill, repel or mitigate a living organism. Pesticides typically used on school properties include: ant cups, insect sprays and dusts; weed control products; mouse poisons; and disinfectants applied to control mold or germs. Most, but not all, pesticides sold in Maine have an 'EPA Reg. No.' or EPA Registration Number on the container label.

May pesticides be used in schools?

- Pesticides may only be legally applied in Maine schools by persons having a valid commercial pesticide applicators license in the proper category for the intended purpose. The exceptions to this regulation are the use of disinfectants used for routine cleaning, the use of insect repellents for personal protection, and emergency use of over-the-counter insecticides for control of stinging or biting insects that pose an immediate threat to human health.

What is required by the new pesticide regulation effective August 31, 2003?

- All schools must adopt and implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy.
- Superintendents or school boards must appoint an IPM Coordinator.
- Within the first 2 weeks of school, parents, guardians and school staff must be notified about the school's IPM policy and notification procedures for possible pesticide use during the year.
- Public and private schools must notify parents, guardians and staff before pesticides are used in schools or on school grounds.

Does this new regulation apply to childcare programs and preschools, too?

- Yes, if the childcare program is in a school or shares facilities with any grades K through 12.

Why did the Board of Pesticides Control adopt this regulation?

- The Board convened a diverse stakeholder committee representing school administrators and staff, pest management professionals, environmental organizations and others who developed the regulation to address potential health risks posed by the use of pesticides in schools.

Must the school hire an outside contractor to do pest management?

- No. Many pest management solutions can be done by school staff. The most effective solutions include keeping facilities clean and well maintained, regularly inspecting buildings and grounds for evidence of pests and pest prevention needs, and the use of non-pesticide pest traps. Pesticides may not be needed.

Does the Board of Pesticides Control recommend any specific pest control companies or have any companies been contracted to help with compliance?

- No. The BPC does not recommend any specific pest control company and no company has been contracted to help with compliance with this rule. The Board can make available a list of licensed companies and recommends that schools use the contracting guidelines available at www.thinkfirstspraylast.org/schoolipm/ or by calling 287-7545.

What is required of the Integrated Pest Management Coordinator?

- The IPM Coordinator is a school employee, not a contractor, who implements the school IPM policy. This person must be knowledgeable about IPM but is NOT required to be licensed unless pesticide application is also part of their duties. However, many schools find that having a staff member become licensed is an asset whether contracting for IPM services or doing it in-house.
- Maintains the pest management and pesticide application records.
- Notifies parents, guardians and staff and ensures that required signs are posted in advance of non-exempted pesticide applications (see below)
- Makes available to requesting parents, guardians or staff a copy of the Pesticides in Schools Regulation (CMR 01-026 Chapter 27), pesticide application records and information about pesticides used at the school.
- Making the school's IPM policy available to anyone requesting it.
- Ensures all pesticide applications are performed in compliance with the school's IPM policy.

How must the initial notification be done?

- We recommend it be included in the school's handbook given out at the start of each year. Or, the notice can be sent home in backpacks, by e-mail or any other way as long as the school is assured that all staff, parents and guardians receive it. Sample notices are available at www.thinkfirstspraylast.org/schoolipm/ or by calling 287-7545.

If the school does not use any pesticides, must the initial notice be given?

- Yes. The regulation requires that all schools adopt an IPM policy and that all schools notify staff, parents and guardians about the policy, where it may be reviewed and how the school plans to notify parents and staff before a pesticide is applied.

How is specific pesticide application notification given?

- During the regular school year, schools must notify parents, guardians and staff at least **5 days** in advance of non-exempted pesticide applications, providing specific information about the pesticide. Over February and April vacations and summer break schools need only post as prescribed below.
- Schools can choose between providing universal notice to all staff, parents or guardians before each non-exempted pesticide application or only to those requesting to be put on a notification registry.
- At least **two working days** prior to non-exempted pesticide applications schools must also post the required sign at points of access and in a common area of the school. For signage specifics contact the Maine Board or Pesticides Control (287-7545) or visit the Web site.

Do licensed school staff have to follow the same regulations as contracted pest management professionals?

- Yes.

How much will it cost to comply with this regulation?

- Unless a school chooses to send notices via U.S. mail, there should be minimal costs for printing the required notices and signs. Other infrequent costs include optional training sessions, optional licensing of school staff to apply pesticides and the resource materials associated with training and licensing. In the long term, Integrated Pest Management programs usually cost less than traditional monthly pesticide applications. Cost of non-compliance could be much higher!

For more information

- © Maine Board of Pesticides Control: 207-287-2731, e-mail pesticides@maine.gov
Web site: www.thinkfirstspraylast.org
- © Maine School IPM Program: 215-4793, e-mail: schoolipm@maine.gov, Web site: www.thinkfirstspraylast.org/schoolipm/

