

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

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What You Can Do to Help Minimize Pest Problems in Your Work Area

The Healthy Schools Act (HSA) of 2000 (Assembly Bill 2260) put into place right-to-know requirements such as notification, posting, and recordkeeping for pesticides used at public schools. This legislation also introduced into law the Department of Pesticide Regulation's (DPR) existing School Integrated Pest Management Program and requirements for reporting pesticide use. The HSA defines IPM as a strategy that focuses on long-term prevention or suppression of pest problems through techniques that focus on alternative strategies using non-chemical practices, improving sanitation, and using active mechanical and physical controls.



The usage of pesticides and chemicals are strictly regulated and must be controlled. If you are having pest problems in your classroom or office areas notify your school office so that a work order can be placed to assist you in resolving your pest issues. Your district's IPM Coordinator will employ methods that uses the least number of pesticides to tackle the pest issue. However, the best approach to reducing the usage of pesticides is to prevent pest infestation from occurring in the first place by cleaning up your own personal spaces and maintaining good housekeeping.



- **Starve and Dry Pests Out.** Eliminate access to food and water. Removing food from the area is the best approach, however, when that is not feasible the next best step would be to keep food in tightly sealed containers. If you are eating in your classrooms and offices, you must be diligent about cleaning up after each meal. Wrappers, napkins, and any items tossed out with remnants of food soiled on it must be discarded in the trash. The trash must be removed and a fresh liner must be put in each day. Keeping food stored in classrooms and offices overnight is discouraged as it will draw in pests in search of food, especially ants.
- **Clean up spills immediately.** Surfaces with left over residue of sugary drinks such as soda, must be wiped up thoroughly with soap and water. If there is any excess water such as a leaking faucet or standing water pooling outside by the entrance to your building due to bad drainage, report it to your custodial department immediately.
- **Organize and Declutter.** Try to keep floors and surfaces clutter free. Pests such as ants, roaches,

and even mice love to hide beneath the clutter. These types of pests try to stay out of sight and if there is nothing to hide under, they will scurry away. Your custodial team helps to maintain the facilities each day by vacuuming, dusting and wiping down surfaces which minimizes build-up of cobwebs and other type of nesting practices your pests may use in your area. However, your custodians can only vacuum, wipe or dust surface they have access to. Aim to put items away. Avoid stacking boxes on the ground or leaving stacks of papers all over the countertops and your desktop. Make an attempt to put away all unused items into drawers and cabinets instead of leaving it sitting on top of surfaces.

- **Monitor for Pests.** Monitoring is key to a successful IPM. Every pest infestation leaves behind signs that you can track and report back. If you notice any issues such as droppings, bite damage on fabric and paper, strange odors, and unusual grim or buildups on walls or surfaces report it immediately to your school office. The sooner the infestation is treated the more easily it will be to remedy the issue.

Remember, this is a team effort. Help your IPM team to be more successful by doing your part.

Heat Injury and Illness: How Your Personal Risk Factors May Affect You



Be prepared for temperatures over 100 F during the summer months. The following is a chart of the signs and symptoms of the 3 stages of heat related illness and how to respond to each stage:

- Water - drink 1 quart of water per hour, and encourage co-workers to hydrate.
- Take advantage of shade to retreat out of the direct heat in order to rest and cool-down for at least 5 minutes while hydrating.

Your school district works diligently to ensure your safety by complying with regulations and actively monitoring employees when temperatures begin to rise. However, your safety is a two-way street.

There may be personal risk factors that you have which affect your ability to tolerate heat that your supervisor or the school district may not know about. Ultimately, you must be your own safety advocate. Understand how personal health and habits may increase your susceptibility to a heat related injury.

Heat Injury/Illness	Signs/Symptoms	First Aid
Heat Cramps	Painful muscle spasms usually occurring in legs or arms.	Move to shaded area to rest and hydrate.
Heat Exhaustion	Headache, dizziness, fatigue, fainting, nausea, pale skin, profuse sweating, rapid heartbeat, slurred speech, irritability, dark urine	Move to shaded area to rest and hydrate. Attempt to bring down body temperature faster by: splashing cold water onto body, use ice packs or cooling compress, remove or loosen clothing.
Heat Stroke	Headache, dizziness, confusion, irrational behavior, coma. Sweating may slow or stop altogether. Extremely high body temperature.	Call 911 immediately. Move to shaded area and immediately work on lowering body temperature by removing outer clothing, using ice packs, and splashing cold water. Hydrate if conscious.

The more personal risk factors you have, the more challenging it may be for you to be able to tolerate heat. Here are some common personal risk factors you should be aware of:

- Underlying health issues- Some disorders can cause heat intolerance due to the affected autonomic nervous system such as diabetes.
- Some medications can change the body's response to heat by reducing the ability to sweat and increasing heat sensitivity.
- Being out of shape has numerous negative health affects to include being able to tolerate heat.

Understanding how personal health and habits can help you assess your ability to work in the heat

Fire Extinguisher Safety

A portable fire extinguisher can save lives, if used during the incipient stage, to put out a small fire. However, it is important to understand that fire extinguishers have limitations. Fires grow and spread very rapidly, thus there are only a few seconds to make a judgement call as to whether you should grab the fire extinguisher and fight the fire or leave and get out safely.



General procedures for responding to a fire:

- Sound the fire alarm
- Identify a safe evacuation path before approaching the fire.
- Discharge the extinguisher within its effective range using the P.A.S.S. technique:
 - Pull the tab
 - Aim the hose and nozzle of the extinguisher at the base of the fire
 - Squeeze the trigger
 - Sweep the hose back and forth
- Back away from the extinguished fire.
- Evacuate immediately if the extinguisher is empty and the fire is not out. Evacuate immediately if the fire progresses beyond the incipient stage.

Fire extinguishers should be inspected monthly and the inspections should be notated on the fire extinguisher tag. Monthly inspections should include:

- Check that the fire extinguisher is present.
- There is 36" of clearance around the extinguisher.
- Check the pressure gauge, the arrow should be pointing in the green operable range position.
- Check the cylinder shell for any corrosion/damage.
- Safety seals/tabs are in place with no evidence of tampering.
- Ensure the nozzle or horn of the extinguisher is not deformed, damaged, or cracked.

Increase Ventilation to Reduce Spread of COVID-19

The CDC recommends improving ventilation in addition to physical distancing, wearing face masks, hand hygiene, and vaccinations to prevent the spread of Covid-19..



Studies have shown that SARS-CoV2 viral particles spread faster between individuals indoors than compared to outdoors. When inside a closed room, viral particles are more concentrated whereas outdoors the particles can be dispersed and even a light wind can rapidly reduce concentrations.

- Increase outdoor air by opening windows and doors when feasible.
- Use fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
- Adjust HVAC systems to increase total airflow to occupied spaces when possible.

For more information on improving building ventilation, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Ventilation in Buildings

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/ventilation.html#considerations>