



## Maine School IPM Fact Sheet

# Selecting a Professional Applicator

**License Requirements:** Maine law requires anyone applying pesticides at schools — whether a professional applicator or a school staff member — to be licensed by the state. For-hire companies also must have liability insurance. Schools should check to make sure these legal requirements are met. Ask to see the licenses of pest control and turf management companies your school contracts with.

**Low Risk Applications:** Training, experience and a strong track record in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) are essential qualities to evaluate in a pest control company. Check the companies references. This will ensure the applicator is knowledgeable in practices that minimize pesticide use and risks to students, parents and staff. Applicators should be able to identify pests and should know about pest biology, behavior and a full range of control methods. Professional applicators should provide proactive suggestions that identify cultural steps for deterring pests in outdoor settings. If an applicator is being hired to help maintain school grounds, their knowledge of cultural practices for maintaining plant health is essential. The business should offer an **IPM service program** as outlined below.

### **Pest monitoring program:**

- regular inspection of potential problem sites,
- identification of pests,
- classification of outdoor areas as to amount and type of use (i.e. game fields, practice fields, lawns),
- establishment of pest thresholds,
- recommendations for control,
- evaluation of control measures.

### **Pest control recommendations:**

- emphasis on maintenance and sanitation,
- pesticide applications only when necessary, i.e. when the established pest threshold is exceeded, and never on a set schedule.
- provide schools with pesticide labels and toxicity information for each pesticide that may be used,
- use of low risk pesticides when other means of control are not feasible,
- scheduling applications when school or grounds are not occupied.

Other things to consider when hiring a professional pest control service are described below.

### **Discuss with the applicator:**

- History of the school's pest problems.
- History of pest management efforts and cultural practices employed at school.
- Pest management actions that school or district will be responsible for.
- Request applicator provide a written pest management plan for the school.

**Designate an IPM Coordinator:** Each school or district should designate a staff member to serve as the ‘IPM Coordinator’ to ensure good communication among responsible staff and contracted professional applicators, to oversee pest management activities, and to ensure that the school’s IPM policies are followed. This person should be knowledgeable about the school’s pest problems and should serve as the primary contact for the professional applicator contracted to apply pesticides.

**Responsibilities of the IPM Coordinator:**

- Collect information on where and when pests are seen in the building and share this with the professional applicator.
- Ensure the professional applicator complies with the school’s IPM program.
- Ensure that maintenance and sanitation recommendations made by the professional applicator are carried out by the school maintenance staff.
- Approve pesticides and pesticide applications carried out by the professional applicator.
- Coordinate notification of parents and staff of pesticide applications according to the school’s notification procedure.
- Coordinate record-keeping of all pest and pest-damage sightings. Present them to the professional applicator.
- Maintain detailed records of all pesticides used (what, where, when, amount, how applied) by the professional applicator or school staff.
- Keep informed about changes in regulations, policies and programs regarding pesticides and pest management.

**Responsibilities of the Professional Applicator:**

- Inspect entire grounds with IPM Coordinator to identify cultural, sanitation, maintenance problems needing correction.
- Prepare a drawing of the school building and grounds and indicate potential problem areas.
- Present recommendations to IPM Coordinator.
- Prepare pest management plan for services to be provided before performing them.
- Apply pesticides only in a manner that assures safety of all people using the school. Never apply pesticides when children and others may be present or exposed.
- Communicate with IPM Coordinator before and after applying pesticides. Ensure all posting and notification requirements are met to minimize the risk of accidental pesticide exposure in treated areas.