

Integrated Pest Management Case Study

City and County of San Francisco

Scope: Buildings, Landscapes, Parks, Openspace
Vector Control
Roadsides
In-house and Contracted Services

Highlights: Technical Advisory Committee
Dedicated 50% Coordinator plus 50% Associate
Accountability at yearly public meeting
Exemption process for special needs



Purpose

Our ordinance states: "The City shall assume pesticides are potentially hazardous to human and environmental health. Departments shall give preference to reasonably available nonpesticide alternatives when considering the use of pesticides on City property."

Creative Solutions

Public input sought

In the interest of transparency and to maintain public trust, we hold a yearly public meeting where departments review their rationale for use of higher concern products by presenting non-chemical measures considered. Time is also allotted for general public input.

Aesthetic expectations

If the public expects perfectly manicured awns, IPM may appear to require unreasonable resources or to fail if those resources are not allocated. If, however, the area can be considered a 'field' or 'meadow' instead of a 'lawn', a new set of criteria can be applied allowing for reduced inputs, lower exposure, and adequately met expectations. "Lawns" can then be reserved for high-profile areas such as the grass in front of City Hall.

Difficult-to-access hillsides

Where steep terrain precludes worker access for safety, we work with local goat herders to manage vegetation. The goats are a strong visible statement of our efforts to protect people and the watershed and reduce reliance on chemicals.

Success Story

In the past San Francisco did not have a coordinated management plan for mosquito control. Many of the City's more than 23,650 catch basins - some inaccessible by vehicle - remained unmonitored and outbreaks were treated with petroleum-based oils. Now our pest management contractor uses a fleet of specially trained bike messengers to monitor storm drains and apply a microbial product (Bs) only where standing water warrants treatment. Bonuses: Bikers report maintenance issues, we support the local economy, and we have gotten some great publicity!



Benefits

Some of the benefits we see include:

- Trust of the once critical public
- Fewer worker complaints about chemical exposure
- Protects at-risk populations making use of public spaces and facilities
- Focus on prevention creates future efficiencies
- Model IPM program with national visibility

Critical Factors for Success

A few of our program elements we consider crucial to our success:

- Monthly Technical Advisory Committee meetings serve as a forum for sharing in-house expertise as well as bringing in experts for consultations and presentations.
- Our Pest management contractor is dedicated to IPM and actively involved in the program.
- A simple Pesticide Use Reporting database is accessible on-line for all applicators and contractors for monthly reporting of pesticide applications and use of non-toxic methods.
- An Approved Pesticide List with several tiers of accountability was created with input from applicators, contractors, and local experts. It is updated every year, then presented for public review, and approved by the Commission on the Environment.

Results

- 80% reduction in overall pesticide use
- 88% decrease in glyphosate (Roundup)
- No pre-emergent herbicides (except at airport)
- 88% of structural IPM visits require no pesticides

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Model Language

Purpose:

The City, in carrying out government operations, shall assume pesticides are potentially hazardous to human and environmental health.

Departments shall give preference to reasonably available nonpesticide alternatives when considering the use of pesticides on government property.

Treatment Hierarchy:

The Reduced Risk Pesticide List should not be used in place of an IPM program. Pesticides should be the last resort, when all other tactics have failed (i.e., sanitation improvements, pest prevention, non-chemical management measures).

Use of Pesticides:

No pesticides may be used on or applied to property owned by the City and County of San Francisco, except for pesticides granted an exemption.

Exemptions:

1. Use of products on the Reduced Risk Pesticide List.
2. Limited Use Exemptions for use of a particular pesticide for a particular use for up to one year upon a finding that the City department has a) made a good-faith effort to find alternatives to the banned pesticide; b) demonstrated that effective, economic alternatives to the banned pesticide do not exist for the particular use; and c) developed a reasonable plan for investigating alternatives to the banned pesticide during the exemption period.
3. Pilot Testing a new product when: a) a good-faith effort has been made to find non-chemical control methods for solving the pest problem; b) the pesticide proposed for pilot testing shows potential for replacing more hazardous pest management methods, or c) the pesticide proposed for pilot testing meets the Department's criteria for Reduced-Risk Pesticides.
4. Emergency Situations.

Notification of Pesticide Use:

Tier I and Tier II Products: Notification at the site of a pesticide application shall be posted at least three days before application and remain posted at least four days after application of the pesticide.

Tier III Products: Notification at the site of a pesticide application shall be posted on the day of treatment, prior to application and shall remain posted in accordance with instructions on the pesticide product's label.

Baits: Notification of ongoing use of baits shall be in the form of a permanent notification sign.

Record Keeping and Reporting

Each City department that uses pesticides shall submit records of chemical pesticide applications as well as non-chemical control efforts to the Department on a monthly basis.

Pest management records shall be made available to the public upon request.

Accountability

The Department shall hold a noticed public meeting at least once a year at which it shall consider issues related to pest management activities on City property. Any City department or contractor using the highest risk products included on the Reduced Risk Pesticide List or granted a limited use exemption or an emergency exemption shall send a representative to the meeting to explain the reasoning behind the use of the product.