



HIRING A PEST CONTROL COMPANY

ASK FOR IPM SERVICES!

Sometimes a pest problem is so bad that you don't want to tackle it yourself. Or sometimes, as with bed bugs or a yellowjacket nest, you need a professional.

Just as **Our Water Our World** promotes products that are eco-friendly and effective, we believe that the best pest control services are eco-friendly and effective as well. **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** is an approach to managing pests that focuses on preventing pest problems, using natural predators and barriers to control pests, and, when necessary, using less-toxic chemicals to get rid of pests.

IPM relies on:

- locating and identifying pests
- getting rid of pests using traps, vacuuming, or other physical or mechanical means
- keeping pests out by blocking entry points such as cracks and holes
- when necessary, using eco-friendly pesticides such as cockroach gel baits.

FINDING A PEST CONTROL COMPANY THAT USES IPM

IPM solves pest problems more permanently than repeatedly spraying or baiting, focusing instead on prevention by keeping pests out of buildings, making sure you're not attracting pests, and monitoring for pests before pest problems get out of control. That's why it is important to ask specifically for IPM services

when you interview or hire a pest management company, or discuss services with your regular provider. In California, three programs certify pest control companies that provide IPM services.

- EcoWise Certified (www.ecowisecertified.org)
- GreenPro Certified (www.qualitypro.org/certified-services/greenpro/)
- Green Shield Certified (www.greenshieldcertified.org)

Many certified companies offer both conventional spray pesticide programs and IPM services. **Even if you hire a certified business, make sure to they use IPM!** Many companies that aren't certified also have their own green service options.

QUESTIONS TO ASK A PEST CONTROL COMPANY

- Is your company certified by EcoWise, GreenPro, or Green Shield?
- What IPM services do you offer?
- Are all of your technicians trained in IPM practices?
- What IPM methods does your team use to get rid of pests before using pesticides?
- Do you provide a summary or record of your service visit that shows the specific pests, where they were found on the property, any repairs that need to be made, and when you recommend coming out again?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ROUTINE SPRAYING?

Conventional pest control often relies on routine spraying of pesticides inside and around buildings, and along walkways. This may give temporary relief from visible pests, but pests that are hiding behind appliances or in wall spaces will survive and keep breeding. Pests can also become resistant to the pesticides. This means the non-IPM service provider will have to come back and spray again and again—treating the symptoms of a pest infestation, but not curing the problem. Spraying pesticides might seem like an effective way to get rid of pests immediately, but you might be extending your pest problem instead of actually managing it with IPM methods.



Choose eco-friendly products for your home and garden. Look for this symbol before you buy.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM IPM SERVICES

The first visit will usually include an inside and outside inspection of your home or building to find out:

- what kinds of pests are present
- where they find food, water, and shelter, and
- how they get inside

The technician may leave sticky traps behind to confirm you have pests and to determine where they're hiding.

The technician should provide a list of simple structural repairs ("pest exclusion repairs") that would help keep pests from living and breeding in and around your home. Most IPM companies can make these repairs as an additional service. Whether you hire someone to make these repairs, or you make them yourself, it's important to get them all done as soon as possible to prevent your pest problems from getting worse.

The technician may suggest housekeeping changes, like putting pet food away overnight or clearing out clutter so that pests have fewer hiding places and

are easy to spot. Don't take it personally! IPM is a team effort.

With clutter reduced and pest exclusion repairs complete, future IPM services are likely to be brief and limited to monitoring for pests (checking sticky traps). But if you see pests, **be sure to call the IPM service company!**



DOES IPM COST MORE?

Studies show that IPM saves money in the long run. IPM may cost more than conventional spray treatments *at first*, because of the time it takes to make a thorough inspection and the cost of repairs to keep pests out. Over time, IPM services should happen less often, take less time, and cost less.

WHAT ABOUT BED BUGS?



Bed bugs are small, flat insects that hide in tight spaces like mattress seams and cracks in furniture. They are similar in color to an apple seed, but a bit smaller. Young bed bugs start off about the size of a poppy seed. They bite us while we are resting or sleeping.

Anyone can get bed bugs. Infestations are becoming more common, and once you have them, they can be hard to control. There are some things you can do yourself, but you may need to use a pest control professional to successfully control bed bugs. If you rent and have bed bugs, you will need to work with your landlord to make sure bed bugs are eliminated. For more information, on how to control bed bugs, view our Bed Bugs factsheet at ourwaterourworld.org/bedbugs.

California state law requires that landlords treat units infested with bed bugs. The landlord must pay for pest control services and cannot raise the rent or cause problems for a tenant who complains. The tenant has to follow the pest control professional's instructions on how to prepare for treatment. Nearby units may also be inspected and treated if bed bugs are found.

WWW.OURWATEROURWORLD.ORG

Our Water Our World® (OWOW) is an award-winning partnership between municipal agencies and garden centers and hardware stores that sell pest control products. Initiated in 1998, the program focuses on less-toxic, eco-friendly products and techniques as many common pesticides are harmful to sensitive species and ecosystems when they reach California surface waters.

Our Water Our World® fact sheets and store displays educate residents about less-toxic pest management. Look for the **Eco-friendly** tag next to less-toxic products in participating stores and nurseries.



Our Water Our World® is a program of the California Stormwater Quality Association® (CASQA), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that advances sustainable stormwater management protective of California water resources. **Our Water Our World®** and CASQA are registered service marks of the California Stormwater Quality Association®.

Pest control strategies and methods described in this publication are consistent with integrated pest management (IPM) concepts, and are based on scientific studies and tests in actual home and garden settings. Use suggested products according to label directions and dispose of unwanted or leftover pesticides at a household hazardous waste collection facility or event. For more information on pesticide disposal, visit earth911.com.

For more information, contact:

www.ourwaterourworld.org

University of California Cooperative Extension
Master Gardeners in your area
<https://mg.ucan.edu/FindUs/>

University of California IPM
www.ipm.ucan.edu

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