

# Newton, MA Integrated Pest Management Policy

## **Preface**

The City of Newton recognizes that citizens, particularly children, deserve to be protected from exposure to hazardous chemicals and pesticides. The City also recognizes that public agencies should be a model of environmentally responsible practices. Employing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy allows the City to accrue the financial benefits of planning, prevention and responsible management, while reducing the use of pesticides that pose a health risk to people directly through breathing, drinking, ingesting or skin absorption of toxic products or via delayed exposures from contaminated soil, food, air, water, utensils and toys.

## **IPM Policy**

The City of Newton will commit to Integrated Pest Management principles and practices and incorporate them into all landscape and building maintenance and construction. This policy will apply to work by contractors hired by the City as well as to work done by City employees.

## **IPM Defined**

Integrated Pest Management is a problem-solving approach to landscape and building management designed to prevent and control undesirable weeds, insects, fungi and rodents. IPM relies on the use of site-specific information about environmental conditions and the dynamics of human characteristics and activities, and pest biology and behavior to prevent, resist and control pests that interfere with the purpose and use of a specific site. When a pest has exceeded a predetermined threshold at a particular site, all appropriate pest control strategies are employed including modifying the habitat, modifying maintenance practices, modifying user behavior, and, if all else fails, using pesticides as a last resort, and only within specific guidelines for least-toxic selection and use.

## **Pests Defined**

Pests are undesirable plants, insects, fungi and rodents. Common examples in the landscape are grubs, chinch bug, crabgrass, knotweed, and a variety of plant diseases. Insects, weeds and fungi are a significant problem on our athletic fields and other public grounds. They can destroy or overtake large areas of turf resulting in lack of playability, large renovation costs and poor conditions for players and other users. Common pests in buildings are mice, ants, lice, cockroaches, termites and other insects and rodents that thrive where food, water, access and other conditions make their entry and survival indoors possible. They can create hygiene and safety problems, cause damage to building structures and, if nothing else, cause a nuisance.

## **IPM Goals**

The goal of Newton's IPM Policy is to promote the health, safety, quality and sustainability of public buildings and landscapes and maximize the enjoyment and use of public buildings and grounds for functional, recreational (both active and passive) and ornamental purposes. This policy will:

1. Reduce use of pesticides through common-sense principles of IPM to the point of no pesticide use, whenever possible and practical.
2. Provide healthy, high-quality and sustainable buildings, parks and public open spaces.
3. Prevent the contamination of buildings, soil, air and water and protect people (especially children and other vulnerable populations), animals and beneficial plants and insects from toxic exposures.
4. Provide a model of responsible stewardship of environmental and community resources.

### **IPM Practices**

Planning: The City of Newton will develop site-specific building and landscape maintenance plans for all sites, which will incorporate pest prevention and control measures. These plans will specify site assessment, testing and the timing and/or type of maintenance practices; monitor conditions and pest populations; establish pest thresholds; recommend educating users or modifying user behavior (including modifying public access, traffic or use patterns); define record-keeping requirements and evaluation criteria; solve problems using expert assistance and resources; and, if determined to be necessary, identify the conditions for use of pesticides. Plans will be reviewed and approved by the IPM Advisory Committee.

### **IPM Guidelines**

The IPM Advisory Committee will develop guidelines for considering all appropriate intervention options, including changes in cultural, mechanical, physical, biological and chemical measures, or no action. Criteria for selecting pest control interventions within these guidelines shall be:

- a) Least hazardous to people, beneficial insects and plants, and the environment
- b) Most species-specific
- c) Lowest cost
- d) Highest level of anticipated effectiveness
- e) Greatest need for ongoing use and maintenance of field or facility

### **Record Keeping**

The landscape and building maintenance contractors and City workers will maintain a record of site characteristics and conditions, interventions, practices, pest populations and other pertinent IPM data and make periodic reports as determined by the IPM Advisory Committee.

### **Notification**

All site users and abutters will be notified regarding any use of pesticides according to state law and any additional requirements established by the IPM Advisory Committee.

### **IPM Advisory Committee**

The City of Newton will establish an IPM Advisory Committee advisory to the Commissioners of Health, Public Buildings and Parks and Recreation, and Support Services of the Newton Public Schools and the Mayor.

The Advisory Committee will recommend action in the following areas, or will assume authority to act in these areas to the extent that power to do so is delegated by those indicated above.

- Develop IPM guidelines and oversee their implementation.
- Develop IPM specifications for RFPs and contracts.
- Provide necessary community education about IPM.
- Ensure that all pertinent staff has appropriate training and experience in IPM practices and access to expert assistance and resources.
- Ensure that best practices and all nontoxic pest control methods are fully exploited.
- Ensure that any pesticide considered for use is fully evaluated (both active and inert ingredients) for the least-adverse impact on people and the environment.
- Determine policy for notification of pesticide use to all users and abutters and enforce the full extent of that policy and applicable state law.
- Specify collection of IPM data and evaluate pesticide-use records of all City departments and make regular reports to the Landscape Advisory Council, the Mayor and the community.

Membership on the IPM Advisory Committee shall be:

- Newton Health Department
- Green Decade Coalition/Newton, Green CAP
- Newton Parks and Recreation Department
- Representative of Newton sports leagues
- Newton Public Buildings Department
- Health and Safety Committee, Newton Change Management Group
- Newton School Department, Support Services
- Health & Safety Committee, Newton PTO Council
- Neutral chair to be selected by the other members

The Committee will seek the participation of technical experts to provide advice and counsel. Broad community participation, including parents, schools, advocates, and other landscape and building users and managers (including the Newton Commonwealth Golf Course) will be encouraged on a non-voting basis.