



Excellence in Integrated Pest Management

IPM STAR EVALUATOR GUIDANCE – SCHOOL SYSTEM EVALUATIONS

Before you arrive:

1. Confirm date and time of your arrival 2-3 days before your appointment.
2. Remind the contact that it usually takes 6-8 hours to complete the audit, and that you will need to visit any pesticide storage and 2-3 representative sites (school buildings) during the evaluation, and that you would like to interview any outside contractors providing structural or landscape pest management services as part of the evaluation. These outside contractors need not be present for the entire process, but should be available for an hour at the start of the evaluation.
3. Make sure you have accurate directions to the meeting location.
4. Give your contact your cell phone number so you can be reached if there is a last minute change.
5. Remind your contact that you will need a complete list of pest control products used by the school system (buildings and grounds, excluding anti-microbials) to review during the evaluation and to take with you when you complete your appointment.
6. Bring with you:
 - a. IPM STAR Program Guide and Evaluation Form (copy for yourself to use, plus one for each participant)
 - b. clip board, pens
 - c. extra paper for notes
 - d. hand lens
 - e. flashlight
 - f. bump cap (optional)
 - g. knee pads (optional)
 - h. Ziploc bags for taking samples
 - i. camera (optional)
7. Wear clothing suitable for getting dirty!

When you arrive:

1. Introduce yourself and provide each participant a copy of the IPM STAR Program Guide and Evaluation Form.
2. Go over the procedures:
 - a. You will be conducting an interview, and then viewing pesticide storage and representative school facilities, to collect information you need to complete the evaluation form.

- b. Your completed audit form and report, and pest control product information, will be submitted to the IPM Institute for review within one week of the audit.
 - c. All of the information you collect will be kept in confidence, and shared only with the IPM Institute.
 - d. An interim report consisting of the audit form, a pesticide toxicity analysis and cover letter with recommendations will be mailed to the school contact by the IPM Institute within one month of the audit. The school system will have an opportunity to correct any inaccurate or incomplete information, and report any changes they have made since the audit date.
 - e. The IPM Institute will issue a final report to the school, including the certificate and plaque if the school system has qualified.
 - f. If you would like to take pictures, ask permission explain that you will be sure not to photograph students or staff.
3. Ask for a list of pest control products used, including EPA registration numbers for pesticides used (excluding anti-microbials).
 4. Conduct the interview, completing as much of the evaluation form as possible. Make detailed, legible notes of any practices exceeding or falling short of the standard. Several items in Section 6.0 dealing with pesticides (e.g., signal words, carcinogenicity, etc.) need not be completed during the audit – these will be completed by the IPM Institute as part of the pesticide use analysis.
 5. During the interview, make a list of any issues that come up that could be resolved during your visit to the pesticide storage or school sites.
 6. Ask to see any documents referred to on the evaluation form: pest log records, pesticide usage reports, pest-related service logs, IPM policy and plan, plus any records of any parent complaint or compliments, awards, articles, etc. that might be in the office. Ask for copies of any documents you would like to include with your report to the IPM Institute. Verify that any pesticide applications follow accurate diagnosis of a problem. Verify that preventative action is being taken to resolve recurring pest problems at specific sites wherever possible.
 7. Visit the school's pesticide storage, if any. Also ask to see any vehicle(s) used to store and transport pesticides. Confirm that each product in inventory is on the list provided. Add any additional products to the list, including EPA registration numbers. Note the condition of the storage and security. Is adequate signage present?
 8. Visit at least one representative school site selected by your contact or by you, including a high school. Ask to see a site with an athletic field used for competition. View any food storage and preparation areas, science classrooms, custodial closets, mechanical rooms, locker rooms and rest rooms to confirm that conditions are as reported during the interview. Visit grounds maintenance equipment sheds, booster sheds and horticultural instruction classrooms and greenhouses. Look for and make note of any signs of unresolved pest problems and pesticide use/storage in violation of policies.
 9. Review the Evaluation Form pages 5-11 to make sure everything is complete. Do not tally the score. You are encouraged to give a verbal indication of observations during the evaluation and overall results before you leave for the day, e.g., "Overall, your program looks good and I'll be making suggestions for improvements in these areas..."

Participants can then start thinking about the potential for immediate improvements, and be somewhat prepared when the interim reports arrive.

As you leave:

1. Remind the participants that the interim reports will be coming from the IPM Institute within one month. They will have an opportunity to respond and correct any inaccurate or incomplete information, or report on improvements they have made since the evaluation, before the final report is issued.
2. Ask if there is any additional information they would like to provide, or anything they had expected you to do or cover that you have not done.
3. Answer any final questions the participants have. Make note to follow up on any questions you can't answer.

On return to your office:

1. Complete the evaluation form as much as possible and attach any additional notes. Mail, email or fax to the IPM Institute within one week of your visit to the school system. Keep a copy for your records.
2. Do not report any score to your school contact.
3. The IPM Institute will review your report, make any changes necessary to ensure consistent scoring and reporting nationwide, and send copies of the interim reports to the school contact and to you for review and comment, and issue final reports incorporating any feedback. The IPM Institute will also draft a profile of the school's IPM program to include on its website, and a draft press release for the school to use to announce its certification.
4. Keep any and all information, including reports, confidential. Do not share any information on the school system with anyone other than IPM Institute staff. If you need help from others to complete the report, do not disclose the school system you are reporting on.

Presenting the IPM STAR Award:

1. Once certification is achieved, the award is typically presented during a public board meeting. Ask your contact at the school to help arrange this.
2. Find out if there is a communications or public or media relations person at the school system who can help with a press release. Usually we provide that individual with a copy of the draft profile to use as a starting point for the release.
3. Presentation pointers:
 - a. Plan on five minutes speaking time unless a specific time limit is provided to you by the school.
 - b. Give a very brief introduction to IPM in general for those who may not be familiar. We usually talk about four legs:
 - i. Know your pests – if you understand that mice typically only travel 30 ft at most from their nest, you can be a lot more efficient in finding and removing the nest.
 - ii. Inspect and monitor to spot problems early.

- iii. Use thresholds – a few ants out on the pavement aren't usually a problem that requires any action. They're performing necessary ecological functions, like cleaning up after us messy humans.
- iv. Strive for long-term solutions when action is needed. Fix the leaky pipe so pests don't have an easy water source. Repair the door seals – so pests can't get in. When necessary, use least-toxic pesticides. Not all pesticides are the same – some are much more toxic than others.
- c. Remind everyone why IPM is important. Children aren't just small adults – they're more active and more likely to touch floors and walls where pesticide residues can be found; they put their hands in their mouths; their rapidly developing systems are more susceptible to pesticide-related illness.
- d. IPM works! It reduces problems with pests like cockroaches, ants, stinging insects and weeds – with a minimum of pesticide use.
- e. Recognize the contribution of everyone including administrators, teachers, and food service, custodial, maintenance staff, as well as any pest management staff or contractors for both buildings and grounds.
- f. Remind the board members that the IPM coordinator and team need their support!
- g. Read what's on the plaque just before presenting it. Indicate that the certification is for three years – so someone will be back to check on progress in three years.