



ELEVATE

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How to Hire an Integrated Pest Management Contractor

A good pest control technician experienced with integrated pest management (IPM) will become your partner in pest control. They will provide effective pest control by providing recommendations for sanitation, maintenance, and organization that prevent pest problems for the current problem and in the future. This may or may not involve pesticide applications.

Before hiring a contractor, get informed about IPM and be prepared to ask questions!

1. DO YOU OFFER IPM SERVICES?

Be prepared to call several pest management companies. Introduce yourself and explain your interest in safe and effective pest control through an IPM approach. If they do not offer IPM, consider calling other companies.



2. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN YOUR IPM SERVICES?

Services should include inspection, monitoring, recommendations for preventing pest problems, treating problems with traps, baits or least-toxic pesticides, and service reports. Make it clear that application of sprayed or broadcast pesticides requires your explicit permission.



Do not accept routine pesticide spraying as part of your pest control program. Spray pesticides should only be used in emergency situations.

3. WILL YOU PERFORM AN INITIAL INSPECTION AND PROVIDE A REPORT?

An initial inspection is an important part of IPM. Clearly ask for an initial inspection and report prior to the application of any pesticide product. Be careful of a technician who says they provide IPM but does not thoroughly inspect the facility. They may not be properly trained on how the environment – inside and outside – contributes to pest problems.

4. FOR AN EXAMPLE OF AN IPM APPROACH, HOW WOULD YOU HANDLE A ROACH PROBLEM?

The basic IPM steps would include identifying the cockroach species; inspecting sanitation, food, and water issues; locating the problem areas where the roaches are living; and identifying how roaches are moving about the structure. The technician would then provide a report providing recommendations for removing attractants and making repairs. Finally, they would apply gel bait or containerized bait to eradicate the problem. HEPA vacuums may be used for severe infestations.



If the treatment recommended is a sprayed or broadcast pesticide, this contractor is probably not using IPM.

**5. WILL I RECEIVE SERVICE REPORTS AND WRITTEN RECOMMENDATIONS THAT I CAN USE TO MANAGE THE PEST PROBLEM?**

Service reports with IPM recommendations will help you prevent pest problems from returning. This is managed by removing pests' access to food, water, shelter and sealing up the building to pest access – think installing doorsweeps, repairing holes, or installing screens.

6. MAY I CALL YOUR OTHER IPM CUSTOMERS FOR A RECOMMENDATION?

Ask for at least three customers to call for a recommendation, and then call them to see if the company does what they say they do. Ask other customers if the contractor inspected first, provided recommendations for treatment and what type of products were used to control the problem. Most importantly, ask if the work and recommendations helped solve the problem.

7. HOW WILL YOU KNOW CONTROL ACTIONS ARE WORKING?

Sticky traps or comparable items can be installed and checked during inspection to see if the number of pests is going down after treatment. Insist on seeing proof that the control measures are working and ask how the contractor will show you progress towards control.

8. CAN YOU SEND ME THE CONTRACT TO REVIEW?

Before you agree to work with the company, ask to review the contract and make sure it calls for IPM to be used. Do not feel intimidated by the contractor's "standard contract" – you can ask that it be modified as needed. Make sure it lists all the pest control services you want, e.g., detailed initial inspection report; service reports with recommendations after each visit; no application of spray or broadcast pesticides without express signed permission; and use of sticky traps or other methods to show treatment is working.

Remember to Advocate for IPM!

You want a solution to your pest problem, not just treatment with pesticides. If your pest control contractor is not delivering on the promise to control – or better, eliminate – the problem, find a new contractor.

Need More Help?

Go to Elevate's IPM webpage at ElevateNP.org/Pest-Management to find other helpful resources and information on how to contact our IPM team.