

School Pesticide Monitor

A Bi-monthly Bulletin on Pesticides and Alternatives

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Beyond Pesticides / National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides
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In 2002, Four States Strengthen Their School Pesticide Laws

New Jersey, Maine, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania joined the ranks in 2002 of states that require schools use safer pest management practices.

New Jersey's *School Integrated Pest Management Act* requires public, private, and charter schools adopt an integrated pest management (IPM) program that focuses on reducing pesticide use and implementing safer pest management strategies.

"Insects and pests in our schools pose a severe health hazard," said Assembly Majority Leader Joseph Roberts.

"The extermination, however, is sometimes more dangerous to children than the infestation. A systematic IPM approach to rid-

ding our schools of vermin will solve the problem while keeping kids safe."

In addition, the new law requires schools provide universal notification to all parents and staff 72-hours prior to a pesticide application. Although many New Jersey schools already implement IPM policies, the law will bring all schools in the state up to the same level of protection. The bill authorizes the Department of Environmental Protection to issue an administrative order against a school that fails to comply with the provisions of the act.

Due to new regulations adopted by the Maine Department of Agriculture, implementation of IPM policies are now required at schools in Maine as well. Additionally, the new regu-

lations require schools provide notification at least five days prior to pesticide treatments.

Rhode Island and Pennsylvania also passed laws requiring schools implement IPM programs and provide prior notification of a pesticide application.

According to Beyond Pesticides' *Schooling of State Pesticide Laws – 2002 Update* 33 states have passed laws regulating school pesticide use. Of those, 13 states require schools adopt an IPM program. Just in the past two years, eight states have passed school pesticide laws because of the special vulnerability of children to toxic chemicals. *For more information, contact Beyond Pesticides or see.beyondpesticides.org.*

Toxic Mold!

***Find Out How to Identify,
Prevent and Control it Safely.***

When mold is present in a school environment, it can translate to an unsafe place for children. Toxic mold can produce skin rashes, nausea, nasal stuffiness, eye irritation, liver damage, and immune system and central nervous system damage.

Beyond Pesticides has compiled a resource packet designed as an informational tool for inspection, prevention and monitoring of toxic mold in the home and school. Contact us for a copy (\$3ppd) today.

Studies Find Pesticides in Children's Bodies

A study published in *Environmental Health Perspectives* (vol 109, no 3) found concentrations of pesticide metabolites to be significantly high in children whose parents reported pesticide use in the garden. The study examined urine samples of preschool children in the Seattle metro area for exposure to organophosphate pesticides (OP), one of the most toxic families of pesticides on the market today.

Concern over the presence of pesticides in children's bodies spreads beyond Seattle. In 2001, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a report, *National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals*, which detected metabolites found in OPs in all samples tested.

The OP class of chemicals includes such ominous names as azinphos methyl, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, and malathion, and such commonly used products as Dursban (which is under a

phase-out due to its extraordinary high risk to children) and Knox Out. These chemicals are extremely toxic and present an imminent danger to children. Furthermore, they are often used unknowingly and unnecessarily at schools.

U.S. poison control centers have documented 63,000 reports made between 1993 and 1996 concerning unintentional exposures to organophosphates - almost 25,000 involving children under six.

Studies in animals show that even a single, low-level exposure to certain OPs during particular times of early brain development can cause permanent changes in brain chemistry, as well as changes in behavior, such as hyperactivity. This may mean that early childhood exposure can lead to lasting effects on learning, attention, and behavior. *For more information contact Beyond Pesticides.*

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Create A Safer School Environment

How to Move Beyond Pesticides and Adopt Safer Pest Management Practices

Whether you are a parent, student, school administrator, teacher, custodian or other school staff, you play an important role in your school's pest management program. Ask the school to stop using hazardous pesticides and adopt an integrated pest management (IPM) program. Not only can IPM decrease the use of pesticides and thus improve the health and safety of children, but it also decreases the cost of pesticide management and yields better results. If pesticides are used, it is critical that parents and staff are notified to allow them to take any necessary precautions.

<i>Advocate for Policy Change</i>	<i>Implement Safer Practices</i>
<p>Research! Start by identifying school pesticide policies that have been passed by the state and/or school district. Gather information concerning pesticide toxicity, especially effects on children. Also find information about least-toxic methods of controlling pests that can be used as an alternative to toxic chemicals. Be sure to pay attention to aspects of integrated pest management, notification and posting.</p> <p>Contact appropriate school personnel: Find out the person most knowledgeable of the school's current pest management program. Find out what pesticides and pest management practices are being used at the school.</p> <p>Gather support: Approach family, friends, school staff, parents, and neighbors to work with you. Others who may assist you include the PTA, doctors, environmentalists and outdoor clubs. Set up a meeting with interested parties to develop a positive platform advocating alternatives.</p> <p>Create a plan of action and involve the community: Distribute brochures and fact sheets to educate school officials, the public and media. Write up a petition to send to appropriate school administrators explaining the hazards of pesticides and viable alternatives. Speak at PTA meetings. Send out press releases or hold press conferences calling for a safer school environment.</p> <p>Work with key decision makers: Contact appropriate school officials and ask for public endorsement of a safer school pest management policy. Approach the official in a friendly, non-confrontational manner. If the official is uncooperative, consider asserting community pressure through a phone call or letter writing campaign.</p>	<p>Policy Statement: Adopt a written school IPM and pesticide use notification policy to insure that safer pest management practices will not fall by the wayside in the future. The following are essential components to an effective IPM program.</p> <p>Training: All school personnel should be trained and advised of their role and responsibilities.</p> <p>Inspections: Regular monitoring can establish if a pest population exceeds a specified threshold. Pay special attention to pest prone areas such as cafeterias, storage rooms, and bathrooms.</p> <p>Prevention: Habitat modification, restricting pests' entry into buildings, eliminating food source, such as maintaining good sanitation practices, structural maintenance and soil health are the cornerstone to any IPM program.</p> <p>Acceptable materials: Use mechanical or biological controls when the need arises, such as traps and predatory insects. After nontoxic strategies have been tried, a least toxic pesticide such as boric acid, diatomaceous earth and soap-based products, may be used.</p> <p>Pesticide Use Restrictions: Pesticides should never be applied when the area will be occupied within 24 hours of an application. Carcinogens, neurotoxins, reproductive and immune system toxins as well as pesticide sprays should never be used at a school.</p> <p>Public Right to Know: Notify parents and staff and post signs 72 hours prior to each school pesticide application.</p> <p>Appoint an IPM coordinator & committee: The coordinator should be a school employee trained in school IPM, and be responsible for overseeing the school's IPM policy. The committee will help establish the need to move beyond the acceptable materials.</p>

*Beyond Pesticides has numerous resources which can assist you through each step, many of which can be found at the Children and Schools program page at www.beyondpesticides.org. An excellent organizing and research resource is *Beyond Pesticides' Expelling Pesticides from Schools* (\$15ppd). *Beyond Pesticides' Building Blocks for School IPM: A Least-toxic Pest Management Manual* (\$15ppd), is a great resource for implementing an IPM program.*