



# How to Contract for Safer Pest Control in Childcare

*A guide from Toxic Free NC*  
[www.toxicfreenc.org](http://www.toxicfreenc.org)

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**Pesticides** are poisonous chemicals that, even when used correctly, can trigger asthma attacks and increase the risk of serious health conditions in childhood or later in life. Children are even more sensitive to health damage from exposure to pesticides than adults are, because their bodies are smaller and still growing and developing.

**Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** means cost-effective pest management without relying on hazardous pesticides. It is the preferred system for pest control in childcare and other sensitive environments because it uses little or no pesticides.

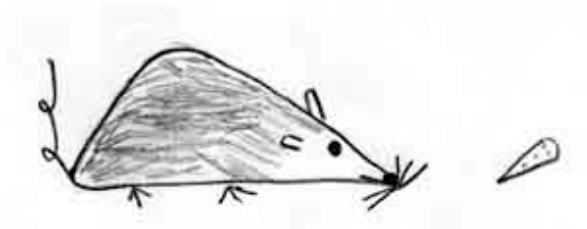
**This guide** is meant to help childcare providers hire an IPM contractor and work with the contractor to ensure quality IPM services.



## QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN HIRING A PEST CONTROL CONTRACTOR:

1. **Do you offer IPM?** Shop around. Call several companies to compare their pest management services and costs. Introduce yourself and explain your interest in safer, more effective pest control through Integrated Pest Management.
2. **What is included in your IPM services?** Services should include: inspection, monitoring, making recommendations to prevent pests, treating problems with traps and issuing thorough service reports. Pesticides should only be used as a last resort, and only the least toxic formulations (such as baits) should be used. The technician must understand that the use of pesticides, indoors or outside, and other than self-contained baits, requires your explicit permission. **Red Flag:** Scheduled or routine pesticide spraying (spraying by the calendar) is NOT part of IPM.
3. **Will the technician begin by performing an inspection?** An initial inspection is an important part of IPM. **Red Flag:** Be wary of anyone who says they provide IPM, but doesn't carry a flashlight and thoroughly inspect your facility.

4. **Can you describe for me how you would handle a cockroach problem?** While there are many ways to answer this question, the ideal response would include: identifying the cockroach species and figuring out where they're living and how they're getting inside; looking into sanitation & water issues and making recommendations for getting rid of the roaches' food, water and shelter sources; and finally removing the roaches themselves. Options include using the "Little Hummer" vacuum, using a gel bait or self-contained bait station to get rid of a stubborn problem. **Red Flag:** Pesticide spraying should never be used in a childcare setting except under emergency circumstances, such as for stinging insects that can cause allergic reactions.
5. **Will I receive service reports of your work and recommendations?** Service reports and IPM Recommendations will help you prevent pest problems into the future by removing pests' access to food, water, and shelter, and identifying any other conditions that may be causing pest problems.
6. **May I call your other IPM customers for a recommendation?** Don't be shy, call their references and make sure their IPM customers are happy.
7. **Finally, use an IPM contract.** If you sign a contract for ongoing pest control service, be sure the contract calls for IPM.



**How do I know I'm getting quality IPM from my contractor?**  
*Take this short quiz:*

1. Are baits and traps used instead of pesticide sprays? Are these methods used **ONLY** when pests are detected?
2. Does your pest control technician monitor pest activity – so that there are no big pest surprises?
3. Does your pest control technician provide suggestions to prevent future pest problems?

*If you answered YES to all of these questions, then it is likely you are receiving quality IPM services. If not, or if you're not sure, review service reports and discuss them with your technician. If you still can't answer YES to all the above questions, you may need to find a different contractor!*

## Suggestions to ensure quality IPM services:



1. **Be there.** Schedule pest management services when your staff is present, but preferably when children are not. You need to know what your technician is doing, and talk to her or him about recommendations for preventing pests. She or he should not be spraying pesticides or using other hazardous products except in emergencies, so there should be no need for your staff to leave the premises during a visit. If pesticides will be sprayed at your facility, be sure it is at a time when children and staff are not present, get all the information about what the chemical is and how to prevent exposure, and then notify all staff and parents in advance so they can take precautions to prevent exposure to the pesticide residues.
2. **Use a pest sighting log.** A list of pest sightings, including location, date and number of pests, will help your technician locate problems and solve them more efficiently. For a sample log, call PESTed at 1-877-NO-SPRAY, or write to [info@pested.org](mailto:info@pested.org).
3. **Ask for service reports.** A service report during each visit should detail the technician's inspection, describe evidence of pests (including those found in monitoring traps) and list traps or any pesticides used (including how much and where). A service report should also describe whether a pest problem is getting better or worse. Review the reports and keep them on file in the same place with your pest sighting logs.
4. **Ask for IPM recommendations.** A good technician will give advice for managing and maintaining your facility to reduce pest problems. This advice may include using caulk to seal up cracks, cleaning behind the refrigerator, installing door sweeps or getting rid of clutter. Follow their advice and keep IPM recommendations on file as well.
5. **Adopt an IPM Policy.** If you maintain a book of 'standard operating procedures' then adopt an IPM policy. Be sure your technician has a copy and keep another in your pest management file. Contact PESTed for a sample policy.
6. **Use an IPM Contract.** If you use a monthly or quarterly service, make sure your pest management contract calls for IPM.



## Model Contract for IPM in Childcare

*This model contract is meant to help childcare providers and pest control companies to develop contract language that supports quality IPM service. You can use this model word-for-word, incorporate portions into an existing contract, or simply use it as a guide for developing your own. You may request electronic copies by contacting Toxic Free NC by phone at 1-877-NO-SPRAY, or [info@toxicfreenc.org](mailto:info@toxicfreenc.org).*

### 1. General

A. Description of Program: This specification is part of a comprehensive Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program for the premises listed herein, which are used daily by populations who are highly sensitive to pesticide exposure, including young children, pregnant and nursing mothers, and people with asthma or allergies. IPM is a prevention-based system of managing pest populations using the least-toxic methods possible. **IPM services include monitoring, physical, cultural, and biological controls, and as a last resort, least-hazardous pesticide applications when non-chemical methods have failed.**

B. Contractor Service Requirements: The Contractor shall provide all services of the IPM program as well as recommendations for structural and procedural modifications to aid in pest prevention. The Contractor should have IPM training and experience – a certificate of attendance from one of NCSU School IPM Program's IPM trainings is highly preferred (<http://schoolipm.ncsu.edu>, 919-515-5650). At least two references from previous clients are necessary.

### 2. Action Thresholds

Levels of pest populations or site environmental conditions that require some type of remedial action by the Contractor and/or property manager shall be established. Other than sanitation and repairs, action shall only be taken when a pest population is both present and posing a risk to the center's property and/or inhabitants.

### 3. Initial Building Inspections

Prior to the starting date of the contract, the Contractor shall complete a thorough, initial inspection of each building or site to evaluate the pest management needs of all premises. The contractor shall identify problem areas, and any equipment, structural features, or management practices that are contributing (or could contribute) to pest infestations.

### 4. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan

A. Proposed Methods for Monitoring and Surveillance: The Contractor shall describe methods and procedures to be used for making objective assessments of pest population levels, including placing monitoring stations in all pest-prone areas.

B. Inspection Schedule for Each Building or Site: The Contractor shall provide complete

inspection schedules for scheduled Contractor visits.

C. Description of Site-Specific Pest Management Methods: The Contractor shall describe physical, structural, operational, biological, and any chemical methods that will be used to respond to pest populations that exceed the established thresholds. The Contractor shall use non-chemical methods wherever possible. The Contractor shall provide the Center Director with written recommendations for any maintenance or sanitation measures needed to prevent future pest infestations.

D. Approval for Pesticide Use: **Pesticide applications shall be by need and not by schedule.** The Contractor will not make any pesticide application to the premises without obtaining approval from the Center Director. The Contractor shall provide a written request that justifies the need to use a pesticide. If pesticide use is approved, the Contractor shall employ the least-hazardous materials and methods possible to achieve control.

E. Proposed Materials and Equipment for Service: The Contractor shall provide labels and Material Safety Data Sheets in advance for all pesticide products that may be used.

F. Notification: The Contractor shall notify the Center Director no less than 5 working days in advance of a non-emergency pesticide application and supply all the information necessary to enable the Center Director to notify other staff and parents of the upcoming application. In case of a dangerous pest infestation or other emergency situation, every effort will be made to notify the Center Director in a timely fashion.

## **5. Record-keeping**

The Center Director shall be responsible for maintaining a pest control logbook or file on site. The Contractor shall be responsible for documenting each visit to the site and all services provided, and shall keep these documents on file for at least two years beyond the end of the present contract, and shall put copies of each of these documents in the on-site file. This file shall include:

- \* A copy of the Contractor's approved Pest Control Plan.
- \* A log or form where facility staff can report pest sightings.
- \* Work Request and Inspection Forms: These forms advise the Contractor of service requests and document performance of all work.
- \* Contractor's Service Report Forms: These forms document all information on pest management activities.

## **6. Manner and Time to Conduct Pest Management Activities**

A. Time Frame of Service Visits: The Contractor shall conduct pest management activities when the facility is not in operation and no children are present. Contractor employees shall always announce their presence to the reception, or directly to the Center Director, when they arrive to work on the premises, and wear a uniform and picture-identification badge during their visit to the facility.

B. Safety and Health: The Contractor shall observe all applicable safety precautions throughout the performance of this contract, in strict accordance with all federal, state and local requirements, as well as with product label instructions. No pesticides should be applied while the building is occupied. In particular, the sensitive nature of a childcare environment requires strict adherence to the following rules:

- \* Service technician's kits or other pest controls supplies shall not be left where children, pets, or any unauthorized person might remove, contact, or consume the contents (02 NCAC 34.0701, NC Structural Pest Control Law).
- \* All materials and equipment for food preparation, health care, hygiene, education or play (food stuffs, cooking equipment, toys, books, medicines, towels, outdoor play equipment, etc.) must be covered or removed before pesticide applications in the same room or outdoor area (02 NCAC 34 .0702, NC Structural Pest Control Law).