

Promoting IPM in affordable housing: A partnership between academia and the community

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Abstract:

Since 2007, the StopPests program has been bringing IPM to affordable housing across the country. With funding from a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA-NIFA) interagency agreement, the evidenced based program has worked with more than 35 local housing authorities (LHAs) nationwide to provide hands on training. In 2012, the scope expanded to include Property-Based Rental Assistance Properties (PBRA). Qualifying sites work with a StopPests Consultant to implement an IPM program. Housing management picks a pilot site and names a local IPM Coordinator. The IPM coordinator in partnership with the StopPests consultant work to develop the capacity of the pilot site. IPM materials provided by the StopPests program are research-based, offer a balanced and objective approach to pest management in affordable housing and are intended to be used in their entirety. Participating housing providers have the opportunity to host a free, on-site IPM in Multifamily Housing Training.



Training Content:

StopPests curriculum is thorough but practical. Participants learn the health hazards of pests and pesticides; how to identify pests; and what they can do to eliminate pests i.e. cockroaches, bed bugs and rodents that are common in affordable housing. The 1-day training includes walking tours to teach property managers and tenants how to complete an IPM inspection.

Here's how training attendees plan to use what they learned:

- "More oversight of the IPM log, integrating pest control into work orders, setting up procedures for caulking units." Director of Public Housing, Columbia, MO
- "Check the qualifications of the pest control company." Purchasing Officer, Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- "Pay closer attention during my housekeeping inspections for clutter that would inhibit effective treatment." Occupancy Specialist, Schenectady, NY
- "Talk to other residents about how working together can help everyone rid rodents or pests from our homes." Resident Association Board Member, Honolulu, HI
- "Definitely no more sprays or foggers." Administrative Assistant, Toto, Guam
- "Keep my eyes open for bed bugs and let management know if I have a pest problem." Resident, Richmond, VA
- "More observation and precautions so that I can evaluate the whole situation." Maintenance Specialist, Tacoma, WA
- "Report all things reported to me." Resident Service Coordinator, Malden, MA
- "Help tenant education and any advocacy efforts needed to make IPM successful." Community Health Educator, San Francisco, CA
- "Use monitor stations more aggressively in my IPM programs." Pest Management Professional, Charleston, SC

Comments:

"I've worked on IPM in a variety of urban settings, but always felt a special connection to public housing. I know that working in public housing is not an easy job, but it's hard to think of a situation where IPM can have a greater impact.."

Anyone who has ever visited a public housing complex knows the value of good pest control. Cockroaches, rodents and bed bugs are frequent companions of many residents of publicly funded housing. Take high turnover rates among tenants, mix with poor understanding of pests and sanitation, and add low-bid pest control—you'll have a recipe for pest problems that is hard for the most diligent property manager to solve.

Mike Merchant, Entomologist, Texas A&M University, StopPest Advisory Board Member



Mike Merchant (L, with flashlight), and Crider look at insect issues in resident's apartment.

Increasing Knowledge - Building Capacity

- Many were unaware that cockroaches can cause asthma;
- Knowledge of health hazards of pesticides were limited
- Tenants frequently take pest control into their own hands and elderly tend to use more toxic chemicals



Crider teaching a StopPests class to tenants living in senior housing

Integrated Pest Management Methods

Illegal and Risky Pesticides

- Pesticides that look like candy
- Insecticide Chalk (Chinese Chalk)
- Tres Pasitos



Training materials are posted on the StopPests website. Anyone interested in obtaining the materials we used can download them free of charge at <http://stoppests.org>