



### **Step 3: Setting Pest Management Objectives for School Buildings and Other Sites**

Pest management objectives differ from site to site, and these differences must be considered before setting action threshold levels. (See [Step 5.](#)) For example, for an athletic field, the objective would be to maintain healthy turf as well as a specific type of playing surface. With ornamental plants, the objective would more likely be to maintain aesthetic value. With buildings or other structures, the main objective might be controlling damage caused by termites. Schools should outline specific objectives in a pest management plan.

Examples of pest management objectives include-

1. Manage pests that may occur on school sites to prevent interference with the learning environment of the students.
2. Eliminate injury to students, staff, and other occupants.
3. Preserve the integrity of the school buildings or structures.
4. Provide the safest playing or athletic surfaces possible.

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### **Step 4: Inspecting, Identifying, and Monitoring**

An IPM program consists of a cycle of inspecting, identifying, monitoring, evaluating, and choosing the appropriate method of control. Routine inspection and accurate identification of pests are vital steps in IPM to ensure that control methods will be effective. Once the pest has been identified and the source of its activity pinpointed, habitat modifications--primarily, exclusion, repair, and sanitation efforts--may greatly reduce the prevalence of the pest. Monitoring includes inspecting areas for pest evidence, entry points, food, water, and harborage sites, and estimating pest population levels. The information gained through monitoring is evaluated to determine whether the action threshold has been exceeded and what can be done in the way of prevention.

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### **Step 5: Setting Action Thresholds**

An action threshold is the level at which action is initiated. It is determined by

deciding, based on the sensitivities of the school occupants, how many pests can be tolerated. The action threshold is set by the pest manager and the occupants and should reflect the pest management objective for the site. The presence of some pests does not, in itself, necessarily require action.

When pest populations exceed pre-set action thresholds, action must be taken. Precise recommendations or actions to achieve specific results are an essential part of an IPM program. Specific recommendations, including an explanation of the benefits, should be based on the evaluation of all available data obtained through inspecting, identifying, and monitoring.

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*updated June 13, 2001*