Park District of Oak Park
Integrated Pest Management Policy
Approved 2018

Pest Management and Disease Control

It is the policy of the Park District of Oak Park (herein referred to as Park District) that Integrated Pest Management (IPM)[1] will be used to prevent and control pest problems in all parks and facilities maintained by the Park District. The principles of IPM require that non-chemical methods of pest control be given preference over chemical controls and the least hazardous chemical controls be given preference over other chemical controls.

The goal of IPM is to strengthen and stabilize the landscape (ecosystem) so that conditions are favorable for plants but unfavorable for pests. IPM usually results in a graduated response to any potential problem, with natural control methods being employed first and chemical pesticides used only as a last resort. In the park setting, IPM has become standard practice for many public agencies, which must consider the health of patrons, including young children and people with chemical sensitivities. Instead of relying on pesticides as the first choice for managing pest problems, IPM uses a hierarchy of pest control methods to maintain pest populations at or below levels determined by park management.

IPM Method Hierarchy

1. **Preventative controls:** Manage pests by keeping them away from the host through quarantines and other regulatory methods. For example, by purchasing high quality materials & using good sanitation practices.
2. **Natural controls**: Create habitats for natural predators of pest insects. For example, use companion plantings that attract beneficial insects to reduce pest problems in gardens.
3. **Cultural controls**: Maintain the site in a way to discourage pests. For example, maintain grass height of 2” or 3” to shade out weeds.
4. **Physical controls**: Use controls that physically inhibit pests’ ability to inhabit an area by modifying their environment. Examples of physical controls include the use of traps and barriers, temperature controls, controlled burning or hand pulling of weeds.
5. **Biological controls**: Use a pest’s natural predators or parasites to eliminate or reduce the pest population. For example, a bacterium called milky spore can be used to control Japanese beetle grubs in turf.

[1] Integrated pest management (IPM): An organized program in which management methods are used to keep pest populations below unacceptable levels while avoiding adverse effects to humans, wildlife, and the environment.

6. **Structural controls**: Use a whole-systems approach to control pest populations, which may include addressing structural issues in both buildings and landscapes. Examples of structural controls include adopting long-term maintenance practices such as caulking and sealing, and repairing the building or landscape to remove places where pests may breed, such as removing indentations in the earth that cause puddles where mosquitoes may breed.
7. **Least Toxic Chemical controls**: When all other methods have not brought pest populations to tolerable levels, chemical controls that are the least hazardous to the environment and non-target or beneficial organisms should be considered.

To be effective, IPM requires that a staff member or a contracted employee be knowledgeable in the identification of pests and plant diseases, since early recognition of problems is crucial. Monitoring and identification removes the possibility that pesticides will be used when they are not really needed or that the wrong kind of pesticide will be used. This allows treatments to be small scale and localized. Waiting for a problem to become an infestation requires a more extensive response i.e. larger quantity of and often more potent pesticides. Natural control methods (companion plantings, soil treatments, natural predators) are normally utilized to maintain a more natural balance of pests and predators, which means that the presence of some pests must be tolerated. In some instances, signage may be necessary to educate park users who see some creatures as pests and are unfamiliar with the workings and benefits of IPM.

Benefits of IPM

- Protects patrons from possible exposure to pesticides.
- Reduces workplace safety concerns when reduced quantities of toxic materials are used for maintenance.
- Can reduce operational expenses since necessary pesticide applications will be smaller in scale.
- Protects both surface and ground water from potential contamination.
- Protects wildlife and the habitat they live in from contamination.
- Serves as an educational model for the community.

Implementation

Some short-term, non-chemical, weed-reducing solutions include: mechanical removal of weeds by pulling or mowing, inhibiting weed growth via weed trimmer, flaming weeds with a hand-held torch, and applying very hot water or steam to weeds.

Long-term weed control methods include the introduction of predators such as beetles or other plants, landscape modifications to the site such as changes in light, water, topography, plantings, or soil, and laying down cloth to smother the weeds or serve as a barrier.

When a pest problem has been identified as existing and is creating an unacceptable level of environmental, aesthetic or economic damage or creating risk to human health, then treatment options must consider the following criteria:

- Least hazardous to human health
- Least disruptive to natural controls
- Least toxic to non-target organisms
- Least damaging to the environment
- Most likely to produce a permanent reduction in habitat conducive to pest populations
- Cost effectiveness over a reasonable term such as 2 to 5 years

Pesticide Selection
A Signal Word on the pesticide label is required for all registered products, indicating the level of toxicity. The Signal Words and associated toxicity categories are as follows:

Category I	DANGER/Poison (Most Toxic)
Category II	WARNING (Moderate Toxicity)
Category III	CAUTION (Low Toxicity)
Category IV	None required, but if used means Caution (Least Toxic)

To ensure the safety of the public and staff, the Park District will use the following criteria to ensure that the least hazardous pesticide and the least hazardous method of control be utilized.

1. The Park District will not use any pesticide classified as acutely toxic by the U.S. EPA. This includes Hazard Category I and Category II, signal words DANGER and WARNING.
2. The Park District will not use any pesticide unless the product has been evaluated by the U.S. EPA and found to include no possible, probable, known, or likely human carcinogens; no reproductive toxicants; no known, probable or suspected endocrine disruptor; and no nervous system toxicants (either cholinesterase inhibitors or listed as neurotoxins by the Toxics Release Inventory.) The Park District, recognizing that pesticides and herbicides are under the continuous

review with the EPA, will continue to monitor the scientific findings provided by the EPA to evaluate our IPM policy.
3. All ingredients in pesticides used by the Park District must have a solid half-life of 30 days or less.
4. No high volatility formulations will be used.
5. No “restricted use” pesticides will be used.
6. Pesticides will not be applied within fifty feet of the perimeter of playgrounds.
7. Preference will always be given to organic pesticides over more toxic chemicals.

Pesticide Use

The safety of the public, Park District employees, and the environment will be given primary consideration in the selection and use of any pesticide. Park District employees and contracted employees must use, store, handle, or dispose of a pesticide, pesticide rinse, pesticide container, or pesticide application equipment in a manner that:

1. is consistent with the product labeling, and Illinois Department of Agriculture regulations.
2. does not endanger humans, food, livestock, fish, wildlife, or beneficial insects.
3. does not cause unreasonable adverse effects on the environment.
4. does not direct a pesticide beyond the boundaries of the target treatment site or result in damage to adjacent property.
5. does not result in pesticide application on any human.

Park District employees must not mix or apply pesticides unless they are wearing appropriate protective clothing and they have received proper training in the safe use of the pesticide product. Employees and contracted employees must be licensed as an applicator or operator by the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

Pesticide use notices must be conspicuously posted in one or more locations at the site of the application. Notices will specify the pest, manner of application, date of application and location. They will contain a caution not to enter the area until the date specified and contact information for the Park District employee who is responsible for investigating complaints and answering questions about the application. Park perimeters will be marked with flags posted around the sprayed area.

Procurement

Any product acquired for pest or disease control must be accompanied by a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) formerly known as a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). SDS sheets will be available and accessible for employees and

residents to view at any time. Products must be purchased from reputable suppliers in the manufacturer's container. The supplier must be licensed to sell pesticides.

Storage
All pesticides will be stored in a secure manner that does not allow the products to escape the packaging or the storage area and thereby potentially endanger human health, contaminate other products, or harm the environment. Storage will be in compliance with all directions listed on the manufacturer's label and in compliance with all pertinent laws, rules, regulations, and local ordinances. Storage buildings and areas will have equipment to effectively handle any emergencies that might reasonably be expected to occur. Incompatible hazardous substances and pesticides will not be stored in the same area. For instance, fertilizers and pesticides should not be stored in the same room.

Disposal
Disposal of pesticides and fertilizers and their containers will be done in accordance with label instructions and applicable state and federal laws and regulations. All pesticide containers must be triple rinsed immediately when emptied and the rinse water must be added to the sprayer tank for proper disposal.

Spills
Appropriate cleanup supplies and equipment shall be maintained to handle pesticide and fertilizer spills incurred by Park District employees. All hazardous materials spills or releases will be disposed of according to the appropriate state agency's directives.

Pesticide Use by Outside Groups on Park District Property
Any pesticide application done on Park District property by commercial pesticide applicators will be performed under contract with the Park District. Contractors must comply with the Park District's Integrated Pest Management Policy. Contractors must have a valid Illinois pesticide applicators license and a copy of the license must be obtained at each application by the Park District Director of Horticulture. The contractor must be accompanied by a Park District employee who will monitor for proper application.

Record Keeping
The Park District will keep records of all pest control measures, pesticides used, and amounts and locations of treatments. Pesticide use records, pesticide SDS and MSDS sheets, pesticide product labels, and available manufacturer information about inert ingredients will be kept on file with the Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds. Additionally, records of all pest control actions are to be maintained, including information on the number of pests or other indicators of

pest activity that can verify the need for action. These records will be made available upon request to staff and the general public during normal operating hours and will be kept for two years as required by Illinois State Law.

Training

Training is a critical component of a successful IPM program and the Park District will encourage training for employees in all aspects of IPM including pest identification. New methods for natural, cultural, physical and biological control will be learned and transmitted to employees.

Role of Greening Advisory Committee (GAC)

The GAC will monitor and evaluate the use of IPM on an annual basis to determine the program's overall effectiveness in managing pest populations. This assessment will include an evaluation of all chemical applications, as well as any new information on the hazards of chemical controls. The objective is to improve the system and eliminate any ineffective and unnecessary treatments. The GAC will respond to requests for information from the public or direct them to an appropriate member of the staff.