Pest Control: An Integrated Approach

Excessive pesticide use has long been considered a dubious and unhealthy remedy for dealing with unwanted guests. The Boston Housing Authority's (BHA) Holgate Apartments has taken an alternative path by successfully implementing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. In doing so, IPM has mitigated Holgate's chronic pest problems, educated its residents to reduce their risk of asthma and saved considerably on maintenance and pest management costs.

The idea behind IPM, as conveyed in Notice 2006-11 from the Office of Public and Indian Housing, is that chemical pesticides can cause health damage and should therefore be used judiciously and only as a last resort. IPM is an interdisciplinary system that targets the causes rather than the effects of pest infestations. IPM programs usually require teams to monitor local pest populations to understand infestation patterns; block pest access to living quarters, eliminate their food and water sources; apply low-toxicity pesticides to address only well-documented pest problems. IPM programs also take an alternative path by successfully implementing an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program.

Before implementing IPM, 66% of apartments at Holgate showed signs of pest activity. After implementing IPM, 100% of the units showed either no or light pest activity. Furthermore, before implementing IPM, the building manager at Holgate spent an average of 15 hours per week dealing with complaints about pests. Since the successful implementation of IPM, the same building manager has logged 1 hour per week dealing with complaints about pests. According to the Asthma Regional Council of New England, the source of the case study referenced in the Resources section of the newsletter, “This marks BHA savings in excess of $16,000.”

More Energy Webcasts Are Coming!

On May 17th, from 1:00-4:00pm, HUD’s Energy Task Force will host the second of two webcasts to promote energy efficiency in public and assisted housing along with other tools and techniques that support the nation’s commitment to finding alternative energy sources. The webcast topics will include:

- HUD Overview of Combined Heat and Power
- Regional Spotlight on Multi-Family Housing
- EPA Tips on Mold Prevention
- Energy Performance Contracting for Public Housing Authorities

A Winning Combination for the Environment and the Bottom Line

The flow chart above depicts the simplicity and usefulness of combined heat and power which can be applied to other applications as well. CHP plants are smaller, cleaner, more efficient, and more reliable than most traditional power sources while making them more affordable for multi-family developments. Unlike conventional power sources, which emit surplus heat as CO₂ through cooling towers, buildings that utilize CHP absorb this surplus heat as useful heat. In doing so, they are at once preserving the environment, providing electricity, and heating the buildings. The combined benefits of CHP thus provide a valuable tool for housing agencies that want to save money and be ecologically sensitive.

The Danbury, CT housing agency recently implemented a CHP project in one of its multi-family developments. The project covers 50% of the development’s total space heating and cooling needs and 100% of its hot water needs, which has reduced the agency’s annual energy expenses by $40,000. David Holgate is the Modernization Coordinator who played an important role in the CHP project. He remarked that Danbury’s CHP model has “provided an excellent model to apply to other facilities”.

Congressional legislation has contained Ride the Nation’s commitment to finding alternative energy sources, and housing agencies like Danbury could play a crucial part in this mission.

The CHP resource links to HUD and the EPA show how cogeneration relates to multi-family housing, and give information on how to begin a CHP project.

Regional Spotlight on Developments With Combined Heat and Power

A website that examines the environmental benefits of CHP

A Boston housing agency case study on CHP

Tip for Maintaining Staff and Residents

• Tip: Always measure the water temperature of a hot water system before turning it on to see whether it is safe.

Maintenance Corner

Spring is just around the corner, too!

A Harvard University study found that there was a 50% to 100% increase in respiratory problems for residents living in water and air-damaged homes. One approach to preventing potentially harmful effects on residents is to institute an ongoing operations and maintenance program.

Maintenance staff:
• Regularly check HVAC equipment and duct work for mold or moisture. Also, monitor roof penetration closures and replace corroded metal parts such as roof flashing and plumbing traps. Y
• Don’t leave a building's maintenance record behind. A building with chronic plumbing problems or roof leaks.

Residents:
• Residents should report maintenance needs immediately upon noticing leaks or water damage. Residents should also clean and dry water-damaged clothes, bedding, furniture and carpet within 24-48 hours. Follow the link in the Resources section above for more information about mold.

Email us with your Maintenance Corner questions:
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