

# King County Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

## MODEL POLICY

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### Section 1. Purpose.

The purpose of this policy is to direct all operations of King County that manage pests or vegetation on public lands, rights-of-way and bodies of water to do so in an environmentally sensitive manner while addressing public health, safety, economic, legal and/or aesthetic requirements. The policy is intended to provide a common basis for pest and vegetation management that will protect endangered and threatened species as well as public health and that will reduce the volume and toxicity of pesticides used. The policy applies to internal governmental operations plus contracted services, but not to the residents or businesses of King County. However, it may serve as a model for anyone interested in reducing the environmental impact of pest and vegetation management in the central Puget Sound area.

### Section 2. Policy.

All departments and functions, including contracted services, shall make decisions regarding the planning, design, and maintenance of grounds, landscapes, road and utility rights-of-way, and water bodies consistent with the principles of integrated pest management (IPM), whenever appropriate. Additionally, if pesticides are used in the course of implementing an IPM program, toxicity, including possible effects on threatened or endangered species as well as public health, will be considered in the selection and application of products.

### Section 3. Definitions.

**Integrated Pest Management ("IPM"):** (From 17.15.010 RCW) A coordinated decision making and action process that uses the most appropriate pest control methods and strategy in an environmentally and economically sound manner to meet agency programmatic pest management objectives. The elements of integrated pest management include:

- a) Preventing pest problems;
- b) Monitoring for the presence of pests and pest damage;
- c) Establishing the density of the pest population, that may be set at zero, that can be tolerated or correlated with a damage level sufficient to warrant treatment of the problem based on health, public safety, economic, or aesthetic thresholds;
- d) Treating pest problems to reduce populations below those levels established by damage thresholds using strategies that may include biological, cultural, mechanical, and chemical control methods and that must consider human health, ecological impact, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness; and
- e) Evaluating the effects and efficacy of pest treatments.

**IPM program:** A program that is developed to implement the Integrated Pest and Vegetation Management Policy. The program includes, but is not limited to, general approaches to be to implement the IPM policy, management plans specific to types of sites or pests, training requirements, record keeping and evaluation practices.

**Pest:** Any insect, rodent, nematode, snail, weed, fungus or other form of plant or animal life that adversely interferes with the aesthetic, health, safety, environmental or economic goals of King County. Pest shall not include viruses or microorganisms on or in a living person or animal, but shall include plant diseases.

**Pesticide:** A chemical agent registered as a pesticide by the Washington State Department of Agriculture, which can be an herbicide, insecticide, fungicide or other chemical that repels, changes the regular growth rate of, kills or otherwise reduces levels of a targeted pest or pests.

#### **Section 4. Procedures and Responsibilities.**

**A. IPM Program.** All departments and divisions that controls pests or manages vegetation shall develop and implement a written integrated pest management program consistent with this policy. The IPM program may contain, but is not limited to, general approaches to be used to implement the IPM policy; planning, design and maintenance standards consistent with the IPM approach for landscapes, rights-of-way, and bodies of water; pest tolerances (injury and action levels); typical pest management strategies for common sites or pests; noxious weed control plans; specific pesticide limitations; training plans; and monitoring, record-keeping and evaluation strategies. The IPM program should use as its basis the most recent edition of the Tri-County Pest and Vegetation Management Guidelines.

**B. Training.** The county shall provide appropriate training for its employees on this policy and the IPM program.

**C. Program Review and Coordination.** King County shall establish an internal steering committee to develop the IPM program and to monitor its implementation. The steering committee shall include representatives from each department/division responsible for pest or vegetation management. The committee shall meet periodically to evaluate progress and experiences in implementing the IPM policy, as well as to suggest revisions to the IPM program.

**D. Public Information.** Information and advice regarding pest and vegetation management given to the public, land owners, private businesses or other jurisdictions shall be consistent with this policy.

#### **Section 5. Changes to this Policy.**

IPM promotes learning and adapting based on experience, a process known as adaptive management. Periodic review or emergency situations may result in the need for modifications and additions to this policy and/or the IPM program over time.

**A. Internal review process.** Once the steering committee referenced in Section 4.3 has developed an IPM program, it shall meet periodically (at least annually) to consider input from departments or divisions that have experience implementing the policy and its IPM program. The committee will revise the IPM program and/or specific prescriptions as needed, consistent with this policy. The committee will consider revised editions of the Tri-County Integrated Pest and Vegetation Management Guidelines for incorporation into its IPM program as appropriate.

**B. Tri-County review process.** The Tri-County Integrated Pest and Vegetation Management Committee referenced in Section 4.3 will meet periodically (at least annually) to consider input from individual jurisdictions that have adopted the Model Policy and have experience implementing it. Based on evaluation of the policy's implementation, modifications may be suggested by the committee for consideration by all jurisdictions. Suggested changes to the Model Policy will be circulated to participating jurisdictions for individual consideration.

The Tri-County committee will periodically update the Tri-County Integrated Pest and Vegetation Management Guidelines based on experience of its members, and disseminate revised editions of its Guidelines to all participating jurisdictions for their consideration in IPM program revisions.

**C. Emergency/Short-term process.** There may be situations where the or one of its departments/divisions cannot wait for formal review processes to take place. An example is the introduction of a new and destructive pest that needs to be treated within a short time frame. In such a case, the internal steering committee will meet on an emergency basis and develop a specific IPM strategy to deal with the threat, consistent with the intent of this policy and using appropriate internal and Tri-County expertise.