

# Safer Pest Control Project's PESP Strategy

## **Describe your Organization's Five-Year Goals Related to Pesticide Risk Reduction**

Safer Pest Control Project (SPCP) is the only organization in Illinois dedicated to protecting children and their families from the serious health consequences of pesticides, while effectively controlling pests. SPCP works to reduce pesticide use by promoting safe, effective alternatives. SPCP has created innovative training and educational programs that enable school districts, childcare providers, lawn care professionals and government agencies to enhance environmental health by using Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM is a proven method of pest control that emphasizes simple, inexpensive prevention practices that cause the least harm to people and the environment. We work closely with other organizations nationwide to reduce pesticide use, and our programs serve as models for many other states.

## **What do you envision doing (broadly) to try to resolve your major issues?**

Education is a key component of our organization. SPCP provides free accessible information on alternatives to traditional pest control.

SPCP will continue to maintain and update the content of our website, which is an important public resource. In 2007, over 180,000 people visited [www.spcpweb.org](http://www.spcpweb.org) and more than 9,500 downloaded documents. Our website holds dozens of fact sheets that are free to download. SPCP will continue to create new fact sheets that address pest concerns as the need and demand for information increases. We will also provide telephone assistance to individuals on alternatives to pesticide use for common household pests.

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## **Goal 1 and Tactics**

To reduce children's exposure to pesticides in schools and childcares. In addition SPCP works to strengthen legislation and enforcement of existing laws that protect children from pesticide exposure both inside and outside public school grounds and childcare facilities in Illinois.

### **Tactics**

SPCP will continue our comprehensive statewide training and education program to transition schools and childcares toward safer, more effective pest control.

SPCP will continue to put a particular emphasis on Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the largest district in the state. SPCP will continue training building engineers, facility managers, principals, and school administrators on state law and IPM methods.

SPCP will also work with licensed childcare centers, state childcare providers and nurses to educate them on state law and train them on IPM with the collaboration of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). Through the proper use of IPM, licensed childcare centers can drastically reduce children's pesticide exposure.

SPCP plans to complete an Online IPM Training Module for childcares during 2009. This one-hour module will be an interactive version of our live IPM trainings, and will include a self test to train childcare staff on the basics of IPM and the state law. It will be available free of charge through SPCP's website for Illinois childcare employees. We will apply for accreditation for continuing education credits once the program has been developed. This sustainable online mechanism for new staff training will complement SPCP's hands-on trainings opportunities. SPCP is also planning to develop an online training module for school staff.

SPCP will work with schools to reduce the use of pesticides on athletic/playing fields and steer them toward natural lawn care practices. We will provide training for school grounds staff and professional landscapers on natural lawn care. We will also work with State Legislators to update state laws to provide better enforcement and support of notification laws for outdoor pesticide use on school playing fields.

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## **Goal 2 and Tactics**

### **Public and Low Income Housing**

To improve the health of residents by reducing both pesticide use and pest problems in public and low income housing.

### **Tactics**

Better sanitation and maintenance methods improve the quality of the low-income housing stock in Chicago in the long-term. SPCP will reduce pesticide exposure by raising awareness about the dangers pesticides pose to residents, and by providing residents, building owners, managers, and inspectors with the tools to adopt safer alternatives such as IPM.

SPCP will continue to cultivate key contacts within the housing community to develop a comprehensive network of partners and stakeholders that can build on our 14 years of experience in this program area. We will conduct IPM workshops in conjunction with community organizations, healthcare providers, housing agencies and property managers. We also plan site assessments, and technical assistance for IPM implementation. Using the train-the-trainer model, SPCP will work efficiently to ensure that information on IPM is incorporated into future presentations and materials used by partner organizations.

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### **Goal 3 and Tactics**

#### Lawn Care

To reduce the use of lawn care chemicals in order to protect human health and the environment from unnecessary pesticide pollution.

#### **Tactic**

SPCP will educate professional landscapers, municipalities, and individuals on natural lawn care techniques that minimize pesticide use. In order to impact the thousands of residential lawns managed by landscapers, SPCP will continue referring homeowners to natural and organic lawn care providers. In addition, SPCP will offer natural lawn care training workshops for the professional landscapers to encourage a shift within the green industry. We will continue to educate residents about natural lawn care practices and discourage the use of unnecessary pesticides on the lawn. This will facilitate dialogue between educated homeowners and their lawn care professionals.

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### **Goal 4 and Tactics**

#### Municipal Policy

To reduce pesticide use in public spaces through adoption of IPM policies at the municipal level.

#### **Tactics**

Municipalities have a responsibility to protect the general public and the environment from pesticide exposure in public spaces. In addition, they can demonstrate to their citizens the benefits of reducing pesticide use. SPCP will work with 3 municipalities on a pilot project to create IPM policies and practices. Information gathered from the pilots will be used to create a toolkit that will contain materials and strategies that demonstrate how to implement policies mandating safer pest control.

We will also continue working with the City of Chicago to create a comprehensive pesticide reduction policy. Outreach activities, strategic partnerships and key relationships throughout the city will be leveraged to demonstrate the importance, necessity and feasibility of a comprehensive pesticide reduction policy.