



## New England School Pest Management Survey Summary of Results



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A 37-question survey was distributed to 1477 New England public and private schools in February-May 2008. A Dillman survey methodology was used to design and conduct the survey. The original survey and final report may be found at the website [www.pronewengland.org](http://www.pronewengland.org).

### New England School Pest Management Survey Returns

State	#Surveys Sent	#Surveys Returned	%Return
CT	315	102	32
MA	591	274	46
ME	178	87	49
NH	172	75	44
RI	111	46	41
VT	110	46	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>1477</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>43</b>

The following are results from the first introductory questions in the survey. Unless otherwise noted, all percentages are of the number of schools participating in the survey.

1. Which below describes your job title(s)? *Check all that apply.*

- 39% School Maintenance Supervisor/Facility Manager
- 27% Principal
- 22% Maintenance/Custodial Staff
- 14% Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Coordinator
- 5% Teacher
- 4% Director/Asst. Director
- 3% Owner
- 2% School Superintendent/School District Administrator
- 1% Food Service Director/Staff
- 10% \*Other

\*School nurse, business manager, administrative assistant, compliance manager, and others

2. What is the setting of your school? *Check one.*

- 43% Rural
- 43% Suburban
- 11% Metropolitan

3. How many students are enrolled in your school? *Fill in the blank.*

Number of children enrolled (*in all schools participating*):   448,697  

4. Which of these pests require routine management, require occasional management, or are never a problem **indoors** in your school?

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Indoor Pests</b>	<b>Weighed Number*</b>
<b>1</b>	Ants	<b>1350</b>
<b>2</b>	Bees/Wasps/Hornets	<b>1084</b>
<b>3</b>	Mice	<b>1042</b>
<b>4</b>	Head lice	<b>824</b>
<b>5</b>	Flies	<b>744</b>
<b>6</b>	Spiders	<b>576</b>
<b>7</b>	Mold/Mildew	<b>534</b>
<b>8</b>	Fruit flies	<b>522</b>
<b>9</b>	Cockroaches	<b>200</b>
<b>10</b>	Termites	<b>190</b>
<b>10</b>	Other stinging insects	<b>190</b>

\*The weighed number was determined by multiplying routine annual management by 4, occasional management by 2, and never a problem and don't know by 0.

5. Which of these pests require routine annual management, require occasional management, or are never a problem **outdoors** of your school?

Rank	Outdoor Pests	Weighed Number*
1	Bees/Wasps/Hornets	1298
2	Ants	774
3	Grassy Weeds	654
4	Mosquitoes	572
5	Mice	564
6	Poison ivy	484
7	Broadleaf weeds	478
8	Ticks	398
9	Turf grubs	318
10	Birds	306

\*The weighed number was determined by multiplying routine annual management by 4, occasional management by 2, and never a problem and don't know by 0.

## Information on Specific Pests and Management Strategies

**Ants** were the most reported pest problem by schools (66%) in the past two years. Sanitation was the most (45%) widely used management strategy. However, pesticides were also used by schools including, ant bait stations (31%), spraying on indoor baseboards (16%), and perimeter spraying for outdoors (15%).

Sixty-five percent of the schools reported **bees/wasps/hornets** problems in the past two years. Most schools (58%) inspected, removed, and/or destroyed the nests. Other strategies that were used included, sealing of openings in playground structures, fences and pipes, etc (27%), installation and/or maintenance of window/door screens (22%), use of outdoor trash containers with tight lids (21%), and use of fly swatters (8%). Aerosol sprays were used by twenty-three percent of the schools.

**Head lice** were a reported problem for forty-nine percent of the schools. The following were implemented by the schools: parental notification (49%), inspect children (49%), discourage children from sharing hats, combs, etc (47%), parental education (37%), and written head lice plan (35%).

Forty-seven percent of the schools reported **mouse** or **rat** problems in the past two years. A significant amount of schools (45%) indicated that they monitored for the pest and/or droppings. The following practices were also reported: glue traps (35%), exclusion (31%), sanitation (28%), and snap traps (28%). Eleven percent of the schools reported using rodenticide baits.

A percentage of schools also reported that **flies** (25%), **mosquitoes** (17%), **ticks** (11%), and **cockroaches** (6%) had been problems in the past two years.

Forty percent of the schools do not have athletic fields. Those that do have athletic fields used the following practices to manage pests: frequent sharpening of mower blades (48%), frequent monitoring for pests (43%), aeration at least once a year (32%), over seeding (31%), and annual soil test for fertilizer needs, etc. (22%). Organic fertilizers (19%) and synthetic fertilizers (19%) were used by schools. Pesticides were used to manage broadleaf weeds (15%), turf grubs (15%), and grassy weeds (10%).

## Administrative Pest Management and Pesticide Use Policies

School maintenance supervisors/facilities managers were responsible for making pest management decisions at the majority of schools (63%). Principals (37%), maintenance/custodial staff (37%), integrated pest management coordinators (25%), professional exterminating companies (25%) and food service directors/staff (12%) also made decisions about pest management.

Sixty-one percent of the schools have a written pesticide use policy and forty-two percent reported that pesticides were applied in/around schools. Professional exterminating companies were responsible for applying pesticides in/around thirty-five percent of schools, followed by school maintenance supervisors/facility managers (11%), professional lawn/landscape companies (10%), and maintenance/custodial staff (10%).

Written pre-notification for outdoor applications (30%) and indoor applications (28%) was provided for pesticide applications. In addition, sign posting was provided for outdoors applications (27%) and indoors applications (15%). Pesticide applicators/companies (20%) and schools (6%) were responsible for providing notification. Fifty-seven percent of the schools indicated that all pesticides were applied by state licensed/certified pesticide applicators.

Sixty percent of the schools indicated that integrated pest management (IPM) was practiced. However, ninety percent of schools implemented five or more of the IPM strategies listed for managing pests. Many schools (42%) indicated that they spent less than \$1001 to implement/maintain their pest management program. Fifty-one percent were “very satisfied” and forty-two percent were “satisfied” with their program.

## Educational Needs

School maintenance supervisors/facilities managers (38%) and maintenance/custodial staff (37%) need/want more information on pest management in schools. In addition, principals (30%), teachers (29%), food service directors/staff (26%), and integrated pest management coordinators (15%) need/want information. However, twenty-two percent of the schools indicated that “no one” wanted/needed this information. Pest fact sheets, websites, and pest management manuals were the “most” useful sources of information. The “least” useful sources of information were professional consultants, posters, and video/podcasts/webcasts. Reported as the most convenient time to hold workshops and/or seminars for school/town staff are the months of August (25%), July (22%), and March (21%). Schools indicated that they would like more information on the following pests: ants (16%), mice (11%), bees (9%), wasps (5%), hornets (4%), and ticks (3%).

Special thanks to the 630 schools who participated in this survey.

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