

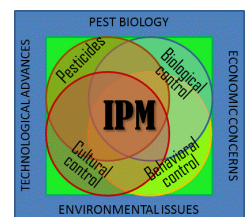
IPM Council's Statement on Municipal Ordinances

In recent years, an increasing number of Maine municipalities have been passing local ordinances that restrict use of synthetic pesticides, especially for landscaping purposes. The IPM Council strongly supports efforts to reduce pesticide use and will be happy to work with all interested parties towards meeting this goal. There are several challenges that commonly arise while developing and implementing local regulations, which need to be acknowledged and addressed to make these efforts a success.

1. While local ordinances restrict the use of pesticides, they have no effect on their availability for purchase on retail market. Commercial pesticide applications can be generally expected to follow the regulations, but the situation with private citizens is more variable. In the absence of appropriate education and enforcement efforts, this may lead to an undesirable situation when some pesticide applications previously done by trained and licensed professionals are replaced by applications done by people who are unfamiliar with proper techniques and safety measures.
2. Approval for use in organic production does not automatically indicate universal safety of a pesticide to non-target organisms, including humans. Applicators need to carefully study all pesticide labels and follow directions for their use. Furthermore, using any material for the purposes of pest control automatically qualifies it as a pesticide, even if it was not originally packaged as such. For example, vinegar (acetic acid) and laundry bleach (sodium hypochlorite) are considered to be pesticides when used to control undesirable organisms.
3. In some cases, limited-scale applications of synthetic pesticides may be necessary for rapid response to emergencies. This includes suppressing pest outbreaks of medical and veterinary importance and eradication of invasive pests before they become established in a new area.
4. Forfeiting the use of synthetic pesticides significantly decreases effectiveness and economic efficiency in addressing some pest problems and may require considerable extra expenditures in order to achieve desirable levels of pest control.

Granting variances and exemptions on a case-by-case basis is a common way of addressing these challenges. While often appropriate, such an approach also requires additional investment of time and effort by municipal authorities and may create tensions within community over issues of fairness and accountability. Furthermore, a large number of exceptions inevitably undermine the original regulation. Therefore, the IPM Council encourages municipalities that consider establishing or modifying ordinances on pesticide use to take a proactive approach by creating a comprehensive set of guidelines from the very beginning. Several state agencies and non-profit organizations are available for assisting in this task:

- Maine Board of Pesticide Control
- University of Maine Cooperative Extension
- Maine State Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
- Maine Landscape and Nursery Association
- Maine Organic Farmer and Gardener Association
- Maine Arborist Association



These entities have the necessary expertise for developing scientifically sound body of local rules and regulations on pesticide use. Therefore, the IPM council believes that their cooperation with municipalities will be of great benefit for meeting a common goal of reducing pesticide-related environmental damage in the State of Maine.