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## CLEAR-UP & CLEAN-OUT FOR SUMMER



Summer break is upon us, but unfortunately pests don't take vacations. In fact, the warmth and moisture of the monsoon season brings an increase in critter activity. To avoid summer outbreaks in your school, follow the simple guidelines here to "pest-proof" your work space. The tips and tricks listed also work well if you leave your home for a vacation away.

### Marvelous Managers

1. **Facilities managers:** have a plan in place for garbage and recycling over the summer. If there is a cut-off date beyond which classroom garbage and recycling will *not* be collected, make sure you communicate with principals to inform teachers and office staff. Infrequent trash collection schedules can generate *serious* pest problems.
2. **Principals:** make sure staff responsible for the Lost & Found convey last communications to students to claim lost articles, then dispose of unclaimed items. Cockroaches, mice, and several other pests are commonly found associated with Lost & Found areas.

### Fabulous Faculty

Unfortunately, many bugs LOVE the things we like to store. Classrooms and teacher's lounges are among the most pest-prone areas in schools. Lounges are high-use areas, often with edible items on display. Classrooms often have limited storage space resulting in clutter. **The end of the year is a great time to make sure all pest-prone areas are especially well organized so they can be cleaned effectively.**

1. If you have art supplies that originated as food items (macaroni, popcorn kernels, beans, etc.) store them in air-tight plastic or glass containers.

2. Avoid using cardboard boxes as storage containers! German cockroaches will set up home in cardboard boxes. Cockroaches and crickets will feed on, and live in these boxes. Substitute transparent storage bins for cardboard the next time you reorganize.
3. Classroom garbage and recycling may not be emptied regularly over the summer. Don't return to a classroom full of flies or cockroaches -- be aware of cut-off dates for classroom garbage and cleaning services.
4. Report leaky faucets and watermarks in ceilings and walls to maintenance.
5. Food treats and snacks should not be left in the classroom over the summer. Take them home with you, give them to students, or throw them out.
6. Have a plan that involves rehoming classroom plants, pets and pet food.
7. Clear-out some "stuff". Haven't used it in two years? Recycle it! Or chuck-it-out.
8. **Teacher's lounge:** open the refrigerator and take a good long look at every item – is it yours? Has it expired or is no longer recognizable as edible food? Don't hesitate, toss it!



Refrigerators need to be empty at the end of the year. Cockroaches live contentedly in the seals of refrigerator and microwave doors, so if you use it, do your part and give these appliances a good clean.

### Clever Custodians

Custodians are a school's first line of defense against pests. They know where the pest-

problems are and often what is causing them.

1. Report leaky faucets, wet spots, or water damage in ceilings and walls (indoors and outside). Water is highly sought after by critters in our desert environment.
2. Clean mops and brooms should be stored 'head' up on wall-mounted racks. Ants, crickets, and cockroaches will feed on the organic residue built up in mops and brooms. Flies, spiders and cockroaches breed, feed, and take shelter in mop and broom heads resting on the floor.
3. Make sure all trash and recycling is removed from classrooms.
4. Arrange for staff to flush toilets and run water down drains (including floor drains in kitchen areas and showers) at least once every two weeks. It is well worth the effort! It keeps the P-traps from drying up, and American cockroaches from gaining access via the drains.

### **Lovely Landscape / Grounds and Maintenance**

Adapted from "Hot Summer tips for Facility Maintenance" by Ed Grubb of US EPA.

A walk around the premises will reveal pest proofing opportunities.

1. Cap irrigation/drip lines that are unnecessary (missing plants). This helps to reduce mosquito breeding habitat.
2. Check sprinkler heads to ensure they are watering vegetation, not buildings or pathways.
3. Prune vegetation path-width away from buildings. Overhanging trees provide pests (ants and bark scorpions) easy access to the indoors.
4. Jet sewer lines to promote good drainage.
5. Clear-out and repair gutters and downspouts.
6. About a week before the students return, flush water fountains and water taps used for drinking and cooking for several minutes.
7. Inspect all gas lines looking for leaks or damage.
8. Ensure proper functioning for all flues, ducts, and vent pipes that service boilers, furnaces and hot water heaters.
9. Keep floor drains filled with water to prevent



the introduction of sewer gas into occupied spaces.

10. Inspect roof for damage and ensure proper water drainage by clearing all debris from roof drains and scuppers.

11. Inspect playground structures and ground materials. Check for splintered wood, torn netting and loose, broken or missing parts on play sets.
12. Determine if additional ground material is needed and check for sharp objects before applying additional ground cover.
13. Confiscate Over-the-Counter pesticides from storage areas.
14. Use non-toxic paints and renovation materials whenever possible.

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### **Remarkable Kitchen Staff**

1. Remove as much corrugated cardboard from the pantry and kitchen area as possible. German cockroaches in particular thrive in kitchen environments and can prove challenging to eradicate.
2. Check to make sure the kitchen floor will receive a thorough steam-cleaning to remove build-up in hard to reach areas – **especially in corners under appliances!!**

### **Stupendous Students**

1. Older students should completely clean out lockers.
2. Parents of younger students must remove all items stored in cubbies and desks.
3. All students can help take responsibility for a healthy school environment by removing clutter, food, trash, and helping to tidy the classroom.

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### **Information sources:**

1. How to Bug Proof Your Home. University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. <http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/insects/az1320.pdf>.
2. Jerry Jochim, IPM Specialist. [http://www.mccsc.edu/~jjochim/html/reg/bios/jerry\\_bio.htm](http://www.mccsc.edu/~jjochim/html/reg/bios/jerry_bio.htm)
3. Ed Grubb, US EPA. EPA Region 10 Healthy Schools News. [https://www.ipminstitute.org/HSNews\\_Spring2012\\_final.pdf](https://www.ipminstitute.org/HSNews_Spring2012_final.pdf)