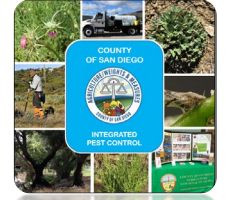




# Integrated Pest Control Solutions

County of San Diego, Department of Agriculture, Weights & Measures  
Integrated Pest Control Program  
Providing Safe and Effective Pest management using the least toxic methods  
[ipc.awm@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:ipc.awm@sdcounty.ca.gov)



## **SUMMER IS THE MOST ACTIVE TIMES FOR FLEAS**



Fleas are small (1/16"), dark, reddish-brown, wingless, blood-sucking insects. Their bodies are flattened side-to-side, and their legs are long and well adapted for jumping. The mouthparts of an adult flea are adapted for drawing blood from a host.

The cat flea is the most common in San Diego County. It may attack a wide variety of warm-blooded animals including dogs, cats, chickens' rabbits, squirrels, rats, mice, and humans.

A flea can live from two weeks up to two years. Hot, humid, summer months favor fleas, and the greatest populations are produced from August to September. Fleas are known to remain in the pupal stage from 5 days to 5 weeks and are not affected by pesticides in this stage. Adults emerge from the pupal case when vibrations from pets or humans let them know a host is nearby; this is one reason why people returning to an unoccupied home may suddenly be attacked by an army of fleas.

Adults can live for long periods without feeding; however, they must feed on blood to reproduce. Adult flea feces is the essential food source for developing larvae and larvae cannot mature without it. Therefore, removing flea feces by vacuuming and steam cleaning carpets can effectively reduce future populations.

### **FLEA DETECTION**

Flea detection is important to know when treatment actions are warranted. Fleas can often be captured with scotch tape as they are seen jumping around. Another method used is the white sock test. Since fleas are attracted to vibration and humidity, a person walking through an infested area with socks is likely to pick up hungry fleas.

### **FLEA MANAGEMENT**

Flea management is normally thought to consist of two things:

- 1) treating the pet
- 2) treating the premises

Non-pesticide management includes thorough and frequent cleaning. Vacuum all carpet thoroughly in a crisscross pattern once or twice a day for an entire month. Vacuums remove 15 – 27% of larvae and 32 – 59% of the eggs in carpets. In addition to removing the juvenile stages, vacuuming will also remove adult flea feces, the essential food source for the developing larvae. If infested animals have been present, vacuum attachments should be used to vacuum cracks, crevices, and upholstered furniture to prevent larvae from finding food. Carefully and immediately dispose of sealed vacuum bags and dirt containing live insects.

***Steam cleaning carpets will effectively destroy all stages of fleas present.*** Conventional pesticides are no more effective for treating fleas than steam cleaning carpets.



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**Steam cleaning the carpets is the preferred method.**

Prior to having the carpets steam cleaned:

- Remove clutter, boxes, and other items stored on the floor to limit flea harborage. Store items on shelves and off the floor. This will ensure a good steam cleaning of the carpet.
- If possible, lower the relative humidity inside to less than 50%.

Additionally, do not feed wild cats as they are more likely to be infested with fleas and will bring them onto your property.

The County of San Diego, Department of Agriculture, Weights & Measures, Integrated Pest Control (IPC) Program performs several functions within the County of San Diego. IPC contributes to a safe and healthy work environment by providing safe and effective structural pest control at County facilities. IPC also performs weed control work along County roads and rights-of-ways, County airports, County sanitization and flood control conveyances, and County Parks. This work preserves road visibility and clearance; reduces fire danger along roadways and intersections; enhances drainage to prevent flooding; and helps protect the region’s biodiversity. We adhere to the Board of Supervisors’ Policy F-45, requiring the use of Integrated Pest Management techniques with an environmentally sound approach to reduce the use of chemical pest control methods.

		Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
Type-of-Pesticide		Quantity	Treatment Description	Quantity	Treatment Description	Quantity	Treatment Description	Quantity	Treatment Description
Herbicides									
	Dry	22 lbs.	334 acres	0 lbs.	817 acres	18 lbs.	648 acres	28 lbs.	1318 acres
	Liquid	393 gallons		608 gallons		451 gallons		451 gallons	
Insecticides									
	Dry	39 lbs.	375 applications	19 lbs.	119 applications	42 lbs.	82 applications	39 lbs.	215 applications
	Liquid	3 gallons		3 gallons		1 gallon		10.5 gallons	
Rodenticide									
	Dry	444 lbs.	350 stations	758 lbs.	350 stations	148 lbs.	350 stations	678 lbs.	350 stations
Non-Chemical									
	Traps	1,562	72 facilities	937	116 facilities	849	98 facilities	1,407	125 facilities