Keep Roaches Out

There are over 4,000 species of cockroaches worldwide. The American cockroach (*Periplaneta americana*), German cockroach (*Blattella germanica*), and Oriental cockroach (*Blatta orientalis*) are the most common species reported in Colorado schools.

**Why are they in our school?**

The cockroach is one of the most undesirable pests to infest buildings. They are often associated with unsanitary conditions, but can be found in even well-kept structures where food preparation occurs. Food items that are left out in food prep areas, around trash bins, or not cleaned up off of floors are an attractant for roaches. Storage areas provide a good home for roaches; they like to rest in cracks, crevices, and protected areas during the day. If cockroaches are seen during the daytime, it is a good indication of heavy infestation.

**Are they dangerous?**

Even though cockroaches are known to carry disease, bacteria, and parasitic worms, they have not been associated with disease outbreaks in the United States. Cockroaches excrete a foul smelling odor that can alter the flavor of food and contaminate surfaces. Some children may develop an allergic reaction, similar to asthma, when exposed to contaminated food, dust, or excrement.

**What do they look like?**

Cockroaches are medium to large-sized insects with a broad, flattened body and long antennae. Immature cockroaches look similar to adults, but are smaller and wingless.

**Did You Know?**

- The world’s largest roach lives in South America and grows as long as 6 inches!
- Cockroaches have 6 legs and 18 knees.
- Roaches can hold their breath under water for 40 minutes.
- Cockroaches can live up to a week without a head.
- Some people develop allergies towards cockroaches and experience skin rashes and respiratory problems.
Managing Cockroaches with Integrated Pest Management

- Eliminate unnecessary water sources, food, and hiding places.
- Dispose of trash regularly as to not create food and shelter sources.
- Repair any leaks or plumbing malfunctions because cockroaches are attracted to water sources and damp environments.
- Store food in pest-safe containers.
- Caulk and install weather stripping where cockroaches can potentially enter the building.
- Early detection is key! Check backpacks, belongings, food containers, clothing, furniture, and appliances for signs of cockroach infestation. Some cockroaches glue their eggs to surfaces, so keep an eye out for eggs as well.
- Use cockroach traps to locate areas with high population density. Traps will not eliminate an established colony, but are a useful tool in determining what your next steps should be. Place traps under sinks, against walls, in dark corners, and in cabinets. If the traps remain empty after a couple of days, then move traps to another likely location.

Likely School Invaders

American Cockroach
- 2 inches long
- Reddish brown with a yellow border around the head
- Found in warm, damp areas

German cockroach
- ½ inch long
- Light brown with two dark strips right behind the head
- Prefers warm, damp areas near food preparation

Oriental Cockroach
- 1 ¼ inch long
- Dark brown to black with wings that are not as long as the body
- Prefers cool, damp, dark areas

For more info, check out:

Colorado School IPM:
http://coloradoipmcenter.agsci.colostate.edu/

EPA IPM in Schools:
www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm

“Cockroach Management”:
http://ag.arizona.edu/urbanipm/buglist/cockroaches.pdf

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