



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
**Department of Food and Agriculture
Pesticide Bureau**

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CONSUMER INFORMATION BULLETIN

LAWN CARE

Massachusetts "Regulations Relative to Application for Turf Pests" (333CMR 13.07) requires you to receive this information bulletin.

Are applications of commercial lawn care pesticides safe?

When pesticide applications are performed properly and carefully the degree of risk is greatly reduced, however all pesticides are by design poisonous to some form of life. Therefore they must be treated with caution. Toxicity can vary from one pesticide product to another and individuals may be affected differently from the same level of exposure. Although there is usually no hazard, you should take steps to minimize your exposure to avoid potential problems.

Is it safer to maintain my own lawn?

Maintaining your own lawn with pesticides can be more hazardous since you will be directly exposing yourself to the harmful chemicals during application. There are additional hazards with improper storage of pesticides around the home. Although many people are able to use pesticides safely, most misuse comes from homeowner pesticide applications. If you do decide to maintain your own lawn, seek professional advice and carefully follow the pesticide label directions.

Can I minimize exposure to pesticide applications?

Yes. To minimize exposure and the potential for health related problems from pesticide applications, there are logical steps that can be taken such as closing windows and removing all lawn furniture and toys from the yard. During and immediately after an application it is also important to keep other people, especially children and pets away from areas where pesticides are being applied.

May I be notified by the company prior to a pesticide application?

Yes. The lawn care professional and/or company you hire must provide you with the opportunity to request pre-notification before each pesticide application. This notification would allow you time to prepare for the application(s). You can also use this notification option to contact concerned neighbors.

Must the applicator put signs on my lawn?

Yes. The applicator is required to post standardized signs on pesticide treated lawns. The signs provide notice to you and your neighbors that a pesticide application was made to your lawn. This will allow you and other persons to avoid treated areas if desired. Children should be made aware that the signs mean that a pesticide application has recently taken place and that they should avoid using these areas.

The Massachusetts Pesticide Board recommends that the signs can be removed after 72 hours. The applicator must also leave you instructions for any other steps you should take after treatment. This information may help you decide when to take down your signs.

Can Integrated Pest Management “IPM” help maintain home lawns and reduce risk from pesticide exposure?

Yes. The Department strongly encourages the use of IPM. Under an IPM approach, pesticides are only used when there is a demonstrated need for them. IPM focuses on maintaining a healthy lawn. Healthy grass is not as susceptible to insects and diseases. Thick healthy turf will crowd out most weeds. If the lawn is cut at the proper height, watered and fertilized properly, the incidence of fungus diseases will be lessened. The homeowner has a number of pest resistant grass varieties and alternative low maintenance ground cover plants to choose from and can avoid the intense management practices that are often used to control pest damage on ornamental turf.

Below you will find links concerning safe and environmentally sound lawn care:

www.state.ma.us/dfa/pesticides/publications/IPM%20Lawn%20Guide%201A.1.pdf
www.state.ma.us/dfa/waterwellbeing/index.htm

What information must be left with me after the application?

After each application, your applicator must leave the following information:

- >> Name and Pesticide Applicators License number of applicator
- >> Date and time of the application
- >> Name of pesticide(s) applied to the property and for what purpose
- >> Directions on what the consumer should do after the application if indicated on the label
- >> The words, “The sign should remain posted for a period of seventy two (72) hours unless otherwise recommended by the Department of Food and Agriculture.”

What if I have a question or a problem?

The Department of Food and Agriculture regulates the use of pesticides in Massachusetts. It is a violation of the law to use a pesticide inconsistent with the label directions. All commercial pesticide applicators must have a valid Pesticide Applicator License issued by the Department. Consumers should check to insure that the applicator is licensed or certified. If you suspect that your applicator is unlicensed or a misuse has occurred please contact the Department of Food and Agriculture. If you have any further questions or concerns about pesticides or the application of pesticides you should contact your lawn care applicator or you can contact the following:

- >> Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau (617)626-1700
- >> EPA National Pesticide Information Center (800)858-7378
- >> Massachusetts Poison Information Center (617)232-2120
- >> Department of Public Health/Bureau of Environmental Health Assessment (617)624-5757

If you have a contractual problem with a lawn care company, please contact the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office of Consumer Affairs at (617)727-8400 or the Better Business Bureau at (617)426-9000 and (413)734-3114.

Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau: www.state.ma.us/dfa/legal/regs/pesticides_regulations_list.htm
Massachusetts Pesticide Regulations: www.state.ma.us/dfa/legal/regs/pesticides_regulations_list.htm
EPA Pesticide Site: www.epa.gov/ebtpages/pesticides.html
Exttoxnet – variety of information about pesticides: <http://ace.orst.edu/info/exttoxnet/>