

Maryland Department of Agriculture
Pesticide Regulation Section
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CONSUMER INFORMATION REGARDING TREE, SHRUB AND LAWN CARE PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS

The use of pesticides is regulated by the Maryland Department of Agriculture. All commercial pesticide businesses and public agencies that apply pesticides must satisfy certain requirements of the Regulations pertaining to the Pesticide Applicators Law. Some of those requirements are discussed below.

This consumer information sheet answers commonly asked questions about applications of pesticides for tree, shrub and lawn pest control.

1. WHAT ARE PESTICIDES?

A pesticide is any substance used to control pests. The pests may include insects (controlled by insecticides), weeds (controlled by herbicides), and fungi (controlled by fungicides).

2. IS A LICENSE REQUIRED TO APPLY PESTICIDES?

Yes. Each firm that applies any pesticide for hire is required to obtain a pesticide business license from the Maryland Department of Agriculture. A license is obtained by completing an application, paying a fee, submitting proof of liability insurance and employing at least one certified pesticide applicator who has demonstrated competence in the use of pesticides.

3. CAN I BE NOTIFIED BY THE FIRM PRIOR TO A PESTICIDE APPLICATION TO MY PROPERTY?

Yes. Upon the customer's request, the pest control firm is required to give the customer advance notice of a pesticide application. In addition, individuals who have registered with the Maryland Department of Agriculture as a pesticide sensitive individual must also receive advance notice of tree and lawn pesticide applications to neighboring properties. In order to register as a sensitive individual an individual must submit an application along with a physician's certificate indicating that he or she should not be exposed to a pesticide because of a current diagnosed condition or ailment.

4. MUST A SIGN BE POSTED ON MY PROPERTY?

Yes. After a pesticide has been applied to a lawn or to exterior landscape plants, the pest control firm must post a standardized sign at one or more specific locations on the property. The customer is requested to keep the sign in place for 48 hours after the application. Signs are not required for fertilizer applications.

5. WHAT INFORMATION ABOUT THE PESTICIDES APPLIED SHOULD I RECEIVE FROM THE PEST CONTROL FIRM?

When a pesticide is applied, or at the time a customer enters into a contract with a licensed firm for pest control, the customer must receive the following written information: 1) Name of licensee; 2) Maryland pesticide business license number; 3) Licensee telephone number; 4) Maryland Poison Center telephone number; 5) Common name or active ingredient of pesticide product applied; and 6) One of the following - a copy of the pesticide label; a copy of a portion of the pesticide label containing precautionary statements and environmental hazards; or a document compiled by the licensee that contains appropriate health, safety, and environmental hazard information taken from the pesticide label and approved by this Department.

6. ARE PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS SAFE?

Pesticides, to be effective, are toxic to plants or animals and vary in range of toxicity to humans. The degree of hazard to humans or pets can be reduced if pesticides are applied according to label directions and if the appropriate precautions are followed by the applicator and the customer.

7. HOW CAN I MINIMIZE EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS?

Remove all toys, pet items and lawn furniture from the area to be treated. Close windows. Keep adults, children and pets away from treated areas. Do not stand downwind during or immediately after application of the pesticide. The customer should read the information discussed in question 5, and follow the precautionary statements or health and safety information provided about the pesticide applied to the property.

8. WHAT IF I HAVE A QUESTION OR A PROBLEM?

The Maryland Department of Agriculture, Pesticide Regulation Section, regulates the use of pesticides in Maryland. Pesticides must be applied according to label directions by licensed pesticide firms and under the supervision of certified pesticide applicators. If you suspect that your applicator is unlicensed, or that a pesticide misuse has occurred, contact the Pesticide Regulation Section to request an investigation. Call or write the Maryland Department of Agriculture, Pesticide Regulation Section, 50 Harry S Truman Parkway, Annapolis, Maryland 21401, 410/841-5710.

If you have any questions concerning a pesticide or its application, you can contact:

- Your lawn or landscape plant pest control firm
- The National Pesticide Telecommunications Network: (1-800)858-7378
- Maryland Poison Center: (1-800)222-1222
- Maryland Department of Agriculture, Pesticide Regulation Section: (410)841-5710
- University of Maryland Home and Garden Information Center: (1-800)342-2507

If you have a contract problem with the firm, contact:

- Your lawn or landscape plant pest control firm
- The Better Business Bureau: (410)347-3990
- The Office of the Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division: (410)576-6550
- Your county consumer affairs office