

# THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



## Department of Agricultural Resources

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## CONSUMER INFORMATION BULLETIN TREE/SHRUB CARE

Massachusetts "Regulations Relative to Application to Trees in Residential Settings" (333CMR 13.09) requires you to receive this information bulletin.

### **Are applications of commercial tree 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 minimal risk, you should take steps to minimize your exposure to avoid potential problems.

### **Is it safer to maintain my own trees/shrubs?**

Maintaining your own trees /shrubs 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 tree/shrubs, 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.

### **How does the applicator minimize the exposure to pesticide applications?**

The applicator will have many ways to minimize drift/exposure. A few of them are:

- Avoiding applications when it is windy or gusty
- Spraying into the contracting entities property and away from the neighbors property
- Looking around the property and the neighbors property for sensitive items prior to the application
- Ensuring that any windows are closed

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

Yes. If you request to be notified before the application takes place, the Department recommends that the company do so. This notification would allow you time to prepare for the application(s). You can also use this notification option to contact concerned neighbors.

### **Do I have to notify my neighbor that a company is applying pesticides to the trees?**

It is recommended that you do so. This is to ensure that the neighbor may also prepare if they are concerned or if the tree that is going to be treated is along a property line. In addition, the company may ask if the applicator can stand on the neighbors' property and spray into your property in order to minimize drift.

### **What if I have a question or a problem?**

The Department of Agricultural Resources 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 Agricultural Resources. If you have any further questions or concerns about pesticides or the application of pesticides you should contact your tree/shrub company or you can contact the following:

- Massachusetts Pesticide Enforcement (617) 626-1781
- EPA National Pesticide Information Center (800) 858-7378
- Massachusetts Poison Information Center (617) 232-2120
- Department of Public Health/Bureau of Environmental Health (617)624-5757

If you have a contractual problem with a 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 Enforcement: <http://www.mass.gov/agr/pesticides/enforcement.htm>

Massachusetts Pesticide Regulations: [www.state.ma.us/dfa/legal/regs/pesticides\\_regulations\\_list.htm](http://www.state.ma.us/dfa/legal/regs/pesticides_regulations_list.htm)

EPA Pesticide Site: [www.epa.gov/ebtpages/pesticides.html](http://www.epa.gov/ebtpages/pesticides.html)

Exttoxnet – variety of information about pesticides: <http://ace.orst.edu/info/exttoxnet/>

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