

# 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 "333 CMR 13.09) requires that you receive this information bulletin.

### **Are commercial applications to tree/shrubs safe?**

When pesticide application 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 treat my own tree/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. If you do decide to maintain your own tree/shrubs, seek professional advice and carefully follow the 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 the 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 the 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 to contact concerned neighbors.

## **Do I have to notify my neighbor that a company is application pesticides to my property?**

It is recommended that you do so. This is to ensure that the neighbor may also prepare if they have concerns/questions regarding the application. In addition the company many ask if an applicator can stand on the neighbors' property and spray into your property in order to minimize drift.

## **Why are my trees being treated for mosquitoes/ticks?**

Mosquito and tick applications may be applied to the tree/shrubs that align your property boundaries. They are often applied in a manner so that the product either comes into direct contact with mosquitoes/ticks or the product remains on foliage for a period of time so that it will kill the mosquito/tick when they rest on the foliage or come into contact with it.

## **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) 626-1782

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 Generals' Office of Consumer Affairs at (617) 727-8400 or the Better Business Bureau at (617) 426-9000 and (413)734-3114.

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