



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

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## **Consumer Information Bulletin**

### **for Schools, Daycare Centers and School Age Child Care Programs**

Pesticide applications have always taken place in schools, daycare centers and school age child care programs. Up until recently, there has been no requirement that you be informed whenever an application is to be made. A recent amendment to The Massachusetts Pesticide Control Act requires parents, staff, and children to receive this Department of Food and Agriculture approved statement, along with a written notification, whenever pesticide applications are being made on the property of your school, daycare center or school age child care program. The notification, which accompanies the notice, will provide you with details about when and where a pesticide application is to be made on school property.

#### **Why am I receiving this notice and what should I do when I receive it?**

This notice provides you with information describing precautions you can take to minimize your exposure to pesticides. The purpose of the notification is simply to provide you with information about pesticide applications that are taking place on the property of your school, day care center or school age child care program. It does not mean that more pesticides are being applied than previously. In fact the goal of the new Act is to reduce pesticide use by requiring that pest management plans be developed. However, some people may be sensitive to low levels of chemicals and should avoid or reduce potential exposure to pesticides. Sensitive individuals might include elderly persons, pregnant women, young children and those with particular medical conditions (for example: those with compromised immune systems, liver dysfunction, certain allergies or sensitivities). This notification will allow you to modify your activities to avoid exposure if it is thought to be necessary.

#### **Who applies pesticides in my school, daycare center or school age child care program ?**

Schools, daycare centers and school age child care programs will differ in their approaches to pest management. Some may use commercial pest management professionals. Others may use their own facilities managers, grounds personnel or custodians. Regardless of the approach used, the person who applies the pesticides must have a current and valid Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau Pesticide Applicator license. Check the notification form for the applicator's license number.

#### **How will I know when pesticides are being applied in my school, day care center or school age child care program ?**

When a pesticide is to be applied on outdoors, the school administration, day care center operator, or school child care program operator must ensure that employees, pupils or supervised children and their guardians receive **standard written notification** at least two working days before pesticides are to be applied to the property. The standard written notification form, which accompanies this notice, includes the following information:

- ☞ approximate dates when the application shall commence and conclude;
- ☞ specific location of the application;
- ☞ product name, type and EPA Registration number of the pesticide;
- ☞ a Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau Chemical Specific Fact Sheet;
- ☞ a description of the purpose of the application and
- ☞ this document which is a Department of Food and Agriculture Bureau approved statement describing ways to minimize exposure and precautions to be taken.

The notification must also be posted in a common area of the facility at least two working days before the outdoor application is to commence and at least 72 hours after the application. Treated areas will be posted with clear and conspicuous warning signs along the perimeter. This information will be supplied to the school by the licensed pesticide applicator.

**It is strongly recommended that the standard written notification process be followed when pesticides are being applied indoors, unless the pesticides consists of ready-to-use dusts, powder or gel formulations; tamper resistant bait stations placed in areas inaccessible to children, termiticides under certain conditions.**

### **Are applications of pesticides safe?**

All pesticides must be treated with caution. They are intended to be specifically poisonous to target pest insects, weeds, mold, fungus etc. - and may also be harmful to other living things including humans. Some degree of risk is always posed by their use. Because of this inherent risk, a number of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms have evolved to deal with those risks. Included among these mechanisms are pesticide regulations such as those enforced by the Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau; licensing and training of pesticide applicators; improved pesticide application methods; and the use of Integrated Pest Management. Furthermore, pesticides today are rigorously tested to ensure human and environmental safety, are less persistent in the environment, more target specific and have been formulated to reduce exposure.

### **What precautions can I take to minimize my exposure to pesticide applications ?**

Some pesticide labels specify precautions that, by law, must be taken before the pesticide may be used. Anyone who applies pesticides (custodian, pest management professional, sports field manager) must be licensed with the Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau. The licensed pesticide applicator should take steps to minimize or eliminate exposure. You should take whatever precautionary measures the licensed pesticide applicator prescribes.

There may also be additional measures that can be taken to reduce potential exposure to pesticides. These precautions will vary and depend on where and how the pesticides are applied. Chemicals may be ingested, inhaled and absorbed through the skin. Know where the pesticide will be applied and how you might come into contact with it. Use common sense. The licensed pesticide applicator is required to post yellow signs to indicate a pesticide application on school grounds. These are some suggested general precautions. Ask the licensed pesticide applicator for other suggestions or directions specific to the work being done.

#### ***for outdoor applications***

- ☞ be familiar with the small yellow signs which applicators are required to post when a pesticide is applied outdoors to turf. Stay off the field until the flags are removed.
- ☞ if you are sensitive to chemicals, avoid the area of pesticide application for 72 hours.
- ☞ ensure that pets are kept away from the area of pesticide application

#### ***for indoor applications***

- ☞ cover or refrigerate edible products.
- ☞ remove or cover toys, clothes, and bedding from areas to be treated.
- ☞ remove pets including their food and water bowls and toys from the area to be treated
- ☞ ventilate as much as possible during and, following an indoor pesticide application, open the windows.
- ☞ do not walk on treated areas and carpets until completely dry. Ask about drying times.

### **What types of pesticides will be applied ?**

Pesticide applicators may apply pesticides in several forms for control of insects and weeds. Dusts, aerosol sprays, sprays, baits, and fogs are all common forms in which pesticides exist and are used. For control of termites, the soil around the building may be impregnated with a pesticide. To control weeds, pesticides may be used as granules or sprays. Mechanical traps may also be used to control rodents. Which pesticide is used, the form in which it exists and how it is applied is dependent on the particular situation. As of November 1, 2001 the types of pesticides that can be applied on school property will be restricted to lower risk pesticides. In addition, schools daycare centers and school age child care programs will have to develop special pest management plans called Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plans.

IPM is an approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common sense practices for preventing and controlling pests. In an IPM approach, all possible pest management options are considered, not just pesticides.

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

Questions about what pesticides will be applied and why, and specific information about the application should be referred to the licensed pesticide applicator doing the work.

The Pesticide Bureau is responsible for enforcing the pesticide regulations and laws. If you have questions, you may contact the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, Pesticide Bureau at 617-626-1781. If your question relates to a specific pesticide, please know the brand name and, if possible, the EPA Registration Number when you call. Alternatively you can email the pesticide bureau at [pesticide.bureau@state.ma.us](mailto:pesticide.bureau@state.ma.us).

Additional information can be found at the Pesticide Bureau website: [www.mass.gov/dfa/pesticides/index.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfa/pesticides/index.htm)

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