

PROFESSIONALISM

Those who work in the turf care and landscape industry know that pesticides can be valuable tools in integrated pest management (IPM) programs. Landscape pesticides are often used in populated areas. For example, pesticide applications can be made for pests of trees found along streets or on green spaces that people use (e.g. lawns, golf courses, schools, and playgrounds). There is more risk of exposure and harm to humans than with applications in remote areas (e.g. farming and forestry). Some members of the public are strongly opposed to pesticide use in urban areas. The reasons for this can be varied and include medical, environmental and personal reasons. Others wish to see pesticides used to maintain turf and landscaped areas in safe, useable or attractive condition. This creates a challenge for landscape managers. Urban pesticide use often has a high profile and can create controversy. Pesticide applicators are often closely watched by the public and media. Applicators must work as professionals, balancing their IPM skills with client demands and public concerns.

Learning Objectives

Completing this chapter will help you to:

- Know the importance of dealing with the public in matters related to pesticide use in the turf care and landscape industries.
- Know the importance of a professional image.

Reducing Bystander Exposure

Turf and landscape pesticide applicators must prevent bystanders from being exposed to pesticides. They must also obtain the results expected by their clients. The following sections deal with these issues.

Advice to the General Public

Landscape pesticide applications are carried out in residential and public areas. This increases the risk of exposure of the public. Pesticide applicators must be aware of nearby human activities. This allows them to reduce the risk of bystander exposure.

To reduce exposure to others:

- Notify the owners of nearby properties prior to application. This may be required in some provinces. Contact your provincial regulator for additional information.
- Post the area at all points of access during the application.
- Avoid applications in schoolyards when children are present.
- Apply pesticides in residential areas when there are few people around.
- Apply pesticides to commercial and public property during off-hours or times of reduced traffic.
- Where possible, restrict access to treated areas of public or commercial properties until the pesticide has dried.

Advice to Clients

Indirect pesticide exposure to humans and pets can be avoided by telling property owners when an application has taken place. Advise them to keep children and pets off treated areas until the pesticide has dried or the granules have dissolved.

Treatment sites should be posted for at least 24-48 hours after an application. Signs on all points of access should give the name of the pesticide used. A contact phone number, time and date of application, and target pests should be given. Consult your provincial regulator for details on posting. In some cases, municipalities may have additional posting requirements.

Precautions to Minimize Exposure

Before any pesticide application, remove or cover all outdoor items (e.g., patio furniture, children's toys, sandboxes, pet toys and dishes). This reduces the risk of indirect exposure.

Showing Competence

To allay public concerns, applicators should work with competence when using pesticides in and around populated areas. Competency is shown by:

- A positive personal appearance
- Good hygiene
- Technical knowledge
- A professional attitude

Practicing IPM shows competence. To practice IPM, an applicator needs to know the biology of the pest and be able to use a number of control methods to get the best results.

Along with provincial certification requirements, professional applicators should continue to build on their IPM skills and knowledge. New control methods,

equipment, and products are always being developed. Applicators need to keep up to date with developments in pest management. This can be done by:

- Reading journals
- Going to seminars
- Taking part in information sharing sessions with local groups
- Joining provincial and national groups

Communicating effectively with clients also demonstrates professionalism. When dealing with clients:

- Find out their needs.
- Tell the client what the pest management program involves.
- Tell people living or working near the area before performing a treatment.
- Answer client questions. Provide sources of information.
- Inform clients when an application has taken place. Tell them what is involved.

Summary

Operating in a professional, competent manner will help reduce public concern and controversy over urban pesticide use. Pesticide applicators should:

- **Project a professional image**
- **Work in a professional manner**
- **Have a good attitude**
- **Have up-to-date knowledge of their profession**
- **Use an IPM approach**
- **Communicate effectively with clients and the public**

Self-Test Questions

Answers are located in Appendix A of this manual.

1. Knowing the biology of the pest and methods of control show competence when using landscape pesticides. **True or False?**
2. Posting the area at all points of access during the application reduces risk of bystander exposure to landscape and/or turf pesticides. List three (3) other ways.

LANDSCAPE