

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs



Department of Agricultural Resources

225 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772

www.mass.gov/agr



CONSUMER INFORMATION BULLETIN

TREE/SHRUB CARE

Integrated Pest Management (“IPM”)

Ask your Pest Management Professional (“PMP”) about IPM and non-chemical steps that may be available to you as part of the services provided. Regardless of which control measures are used, ask your PMP what actions you can take to avoid or reduce the pest problem. For more information on IPM, please [visit: https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/integrated-pest-management-ipm-principles](https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/integrated-pest-management-ipm-principles).

Q. How are applications made to trees/shrubs?

Applications can be performed by using a variety of application equipment to apply pesticides. This includes backpack motorized mist blower, which looks very similar to a leaf blower, handpump backpack sprayers, hydraulic power sprayers, or tree injections. They may also apply granular products, which are applied either by hand or a hand spreader tool.

Q. Are commercial applications to tree/shrubs safe?

All pesticides must be treated with caution. Pesticides are intended to be specifically poisonous to a target pest (insects, weeds, mold, fungus, etc) but if used improperly may also be harmful to other living things, including humans and pets. If used according to the label directions, which is required by state and federal law, the product should pose the least amount of risk to the environment and public health.

Some people such as children, elderly citizens, pregnant women and those with health problems may be sensitive to low levels of chemicals and should avoid or minimize exposure to pesticides. Medical questions should be referred to your physician or one of the contacts listed at the end of this sheet.

Q. 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.

Q. 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

Q. 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.

Q. 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 may ask if an applicator can stand on the neighbors' property and spray into your property in order to minimize drift.

Q. 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.

Q. What if I have a question or a problem?

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources ("MDAR") 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 MDAR. Consumers should check the applicators' license to ensure that the applicator is licensed or certified. If you suspect that the applicator is unlicensed or that there was a misuse of a pesticide, please fill out a complaint form [here: https://www.mass.gov/forms/pesticide-enforcement-complaint-form](https://www.mass.gov/forms/pesticide-enforcement-complaint-form).

- [Massachusetts Pesticide Enforcement Program](#): (617) 626-1782
- [EPA National Pesticide Information Center](#): (800) 858-7378
- [Massachusetts/Rhode Island Poison Center](#): (800) 222-1222
- [Department of Public Health/Bureau of Environmental Health Assessment](#): (617) 624-5757

If you have a contractual problem with a pest control 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 regulations (333 CMR 13.08) require you to receive this notice prior to a pesticide application. *