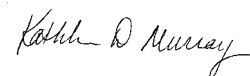


To: School Facilities Directors and IPM Coordinators
From: Kathy Murray, Coordinator, Maine School Integrated Pest Management Program, Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
Date: 20 June 2011



Important News about Pesticide Use on School Grounds

Summer vacation is prime time for turf care on school lawns and sports fields. Before you send your crews out or bring in contractors, there are new legislative developments you should know about. A bill introduced in state legislature this year would have banned pesticides on school grounds, but was amended to focus on minimizing risks of children's exposure to pesticides. Although pesticides are still allowed under the amended bill, a few commonsense practices—such as spot treating and maximizing the time period between pesticide applications and reentry—will go a long way toward the goal of protecting children.

LD 837—a Resolve to Enhance the Use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) on School Grounds—was passed by the Maine State Legislature and will become law in September 2011. Many of you may recall that this bill, as originally proposed, would have banned all pesticide use on public and private K–12 school grounds. After receiving input from stakeholders, including school officials who testified at the hearings, LD 837 was substantially amended to eliminate the pesticide ban; however, the resolve requires development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and directs the Maine Board of Pesticides Control (BPC) to assess compliance with the current school IPM regulations.

Because the Legislature did not simply abandon this proposal altogether, it shows that pesticide use on school properties is likely to remain an important issue. School pesticide bans have recently been imposed in other states in our region and there is considerable and passionate interest in Maine for protecting children from the perceived risks of pesticide exposure.

The most immediate directive from the Legislature is a requirement to develop BMPs for the establishment and maintenance of school lawns, playgrounds, and playing fields. The BMPs must, at a minimum, address soil and site conditions, and establish treatment thresholds and guidelines based on practical considerations and current science.

LD 837 also requires the BPC to conduct an assessment of how well Maine schools are complying with existing school IPM requirements and report the results to the Legislature by February 2012. What does that mean for you? The Maine Department of Agriculture will be conducting a survey and/or on-site inspections to find out what processes you use to make pest control decisions and what products you use for pest control. Your cooperation is essential to ensure the end result is school-friendly.

In addition, a stakeholder group will be convened to help develop BMPs for school grounds. Please contact us if you are willing to serve on this committee. Your expertise is essential!

In the meantime, what should you do to ensure your district is in compliance with existing regulations? Make sure your school's IPM program is fully functional and your pest management records are up-to-date.

Here's how:

- Brush up on Maine’s School IPM regulation—[CMR 01-026 Chapter 27](http://www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/schoolipm/what/ch27.htm) .
www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/schoolipm/what/ch27.htm.
- Review your school’s IPM policy, program, and records.
- Get out your School IPM Toolkit binder, or download it at www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/schoolipm/manuals/toolkit.htm/, or contact us by e-mail (kathy.murray@maine.gov), or phone (207-287-7616), to request a free printed copy. The toolkit is loaded with checklists, sample contracts and notices, fact sheets, and more. It is intended to provide school IPM coordinators, and the rest of your team, step-by-step guidance for implementing IPM in compliance with state regulations.
- Meet with your IPM team. Don’t have an IPM committee? Now would be a good time to establish one. See the Toolkit for guidance. Have your IPM team or committee review your IPM records to answer these questions:
 - Has your district’s IPM coordinator received training recently?
 - Is every pesticide carefully selected? Are you spot-treating? Maximizing the time between application and reentry by children? Using pesticides only in conjunction with non-pesticide management methods such as core aeration, overseeding, and proper mowing practices?
 - Does each member of your team know and follow protocol for reporting and responding to pest issues?
 - Are the required notices sent to parents/guardians and staff as required?
 - Are sports fields or other facilities maintained by another department or contracted service provider and, if so, are all pest control activities well coordinated, communicated, and recorded with the school’s IPM coordinator?

The Maine School IPM Program provides training, checklists, sample documents, and more. All are available on our website: www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/schoolipm/

-or-

Contact Us:

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 207-287-7616
kathy.murray@maine.gov
www.maine.gov/agriculture/pesticides/schoolipm/

Pesticide Questions?

Maine Board of Pesticides Control
 207-287-2731
www.thinkfirstspraylast.org

Need Additional Pest Help?

University of Maine Pest Management Office
 800-287-0279
<http://umaine.edu/ipm/>