



Pesticide Notification—Your Rights & Responsibilities

It's All about Communication!

Maybe your next door neighbors apply pesticides to their lawn or trees. Or there's a farm or orchard near your home where pesticides might be used for crop protection. You've wondered about the pesticides that are applied outdoors in your vicinity and want to know in advance when these products are used.

You have the right to know, but you also have the responsibility to take the first step in opening communication with your neighbor. Maine law assures you that right in two ways:

- **Request for Notification** (for all outdoor pesticide applications)
- **Maine Pesticide Notification Registry** (for most non-agricultural pesticide applications)

Whichever of the two means of notification you choose, you will find that communication between you and your neighbors who use pesticides will help avoid one of the most common issues that arises between neighbors—being surprised when something unexpected occurs. Communication informs the people who use pesticides of your desire to be notified. And, you can then take measures to protect yourself and your family from unintended or incidental exposure by closing windows, taking clothes off the laundry line, or keeping children and pets indoors.

Pesticides are used every day in Maine for control of insects, weeds, and other pests, to protect our food supply, ourselves, and our homes and gardens. Examples of people who use pesticides include homeowners, renters, landscape and lawncare professionals, farmers (conventional and organic), foresters, utilities and rights-of-way managers, and public land managers. Similarly, examples of places where pesticides may be used include businesses, homes, farms, institutions, and public spaces.

Everyone has the right to use pesticides, but with that right comes the responsibility to follow the pesticide application laws, including reading and following label directions, and notifying nearby neighbors who request it.

How to Receive Notification about Pesticide Applications

Request for Notification

A Request for Notification is a comprehensive option that applies to *all* outdoor pesticide applications made by *anyone* making them. This system is initiated by you simply asking your neighbor for information regarding pesticide applications and/or notification prior to applications.

If you live or work within 500 feet (1,000 feet for aerial applications) of any outdoor area treated with pesticides (including businesses, homes, farms, forestland, institutions, and public spaces), you are entitled to receive information about pesticide applications, including what is being used and when.

Under this option, the right to information begins with you. You must contact your neighbor and make it clear what you are requesting, including notification prior to treatments. Being as specific as possible about what information you are requesting lessens the chance of misunderstanding your needs. The request may be made in any fashion, as long as the neighbor is aware of your name, address, and phone number. Making a request in person is your best means of communicating—after all, you are neighbors.

The request should be made to the neighbor responsible for management of the land where a pesticide application takes place. If you are uncertain as to who should receive the request, contact the land owner directly. Your town or municipal office keeps names and addresses of land owners in the local tax records. Once the neighbor or land owner receives your request for notification, you can expect to be informed. The timing of this notification must be agreed upon by both you and your neighbor.

The law says your neighbor must make sure you are notified before pesticides are used. See BPC rule Chapter 28—Notification Provisions for Outdoor Pesticide Applications, Section 1, for the regulations governing Request for Notification.

Maine Pesticide Notification Registry

The Maine Pesticide Notification Registry is a more formal notification option that requires a longer lead time to participate. The purpose of this registry is to maintain a list of individuals who must be notified of outdoor, non-agricultural pesticide applications in their vicinity. This registry best serves urban and suburban residents who seek a more formal notification process for outdoor pesticide applications made on neighboring lawns, surrounding landscapes, and around structures.

For an annual fee of \$20.00 (the fee may be waived in cases of financial hardship), residents' names and addresses are distributed to licensed commercial pesticide applicators. Once on the list, residents can expect applicators to provide pretreatment notification via telephone, personal contact, or mail. This communication must occur between six hours and 14 days ahead of outdoor pesticide use within 250 feet of a registrant's property.

Homeowners or renters treating around their own home can be required to notify registrants, too, if desired—but first you need to alert them of your wishes using a BPC-supplied form.

To receive an application so you can be listed on the next registry, *see Website Downloads or Contact Information below*. The deadline is December 31 to be included on the registry for the following year. However, you may initiate a Request for Notification (*see page 1*) at any time, by simply asking your neighbor.

See BPC rule Chapter 28—Notification Provisions for Outdoor Pesticide Applications, Section 2, for the regulations governing the Non-Agricultural Pesticide Notification Registry.

Please Note: There are some types of applications that are exempt from notification through the registry.

Registry Distribution: The registry is distributed to professional pesticide applicators in Maine. The list is also available to anyone upon request.

The Bottom Line on Pesticide Notification—It's All about Communication

Yes, it's good to know our right to be notified is protected by law. But, having an open line of communication with your neighbors is the key to avoiding conflicts of any type. So whether the notification laws apply to your situation or not, communicating with your neighbors is still the best medicine. Talk with them, express your concerns, ask your questions, talk about your needs, and develop a plan that will work for all. Keep it simple.

The BPC supports communication between neighbors and is available to facilitate and help mediate any issues concerning pesticide notification.

Website Downloads

- Chapter 28—Notification Provisions for Outdoor Pesticide Applications: thinkfirstspraylast.org/laws/regs.htm
- The BPC webpage, thinkfirstspraylast.org/public/notification.htm, contains links to the following documents:
 - Pesticide Notification Registry Application
 - Application for Fee Waiver
 - Current Non-Agricultural Pesticide Notification Registry

For a printed copy of any of the above documents, contact the BPC office (*see below*).

Contact Information

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