

Model Landscape Policy

TURF AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT POLICY AT [FACILITY]

I. PURPOSE

To establish the policy and provide guidelines for achieving environmentally sound management practices for the maintenance of healthy, attractive turf and landscape at [facility] that protect patients/residents, employees, and visitors from adverse health impacts of pesticides, improve soil health of [facility's] real property, and protect the Chesapeake Bay watershed from the adverse environmental effects of turf and landscape management at [facility], including pesticide and nutrient runoff.

[For facilities outside Bay watershed: To establish the policy and provide guidelines for achieving environmentally sound management practices for the maintenance of healthy, attractive turf and landscape at [facility] that protect patients/residents, employees, and visitors from adverse health impacts of pesticides, improve soil health of [facility's] real property, and protect the environment from the adverse effects of turf and landscape management at [facility], including pesticide and nutrient runoff.]

II. DESIRED OUTCOME

Healthy and attractive grounds and exterior environments at [facility] based on non-toxic natural turf and landscape strategies.

III. DEFINITIONS

Natural Turf and Landscape Management is an effective approach to managing turf and landscapes that promotes soil health and protects public health and the environment through the adoption of cultural practices and selection of non-toxic and non-synthetic, inputs. This approach establishes and maintains a soil profile rich in microbiology that supports strong, healthy turf that is able to withstand the stresses that affect institutional turf and landscape, including foot traffic, insects, weeds, disease, drought, and heat stress. See Appendix 1: [title]

Fertilizer is any substance or mixture of substances intended to deliver necessary nutrients for the health and maintenance of grass and other desired turf and landscape plants. For purposes of definitions under this policy, "synthetic" fertilizers are distinguished from "organic" or "natural" fertilizers based on the relative water solubility of the form of available nitrogen. In practice, synthetic fertilizer delivers nutrients quickly, while organic fertilizer delivers nutrients sustainably. Synthetic fertilizer is characterized by the relative high solubility of the nitrogen-available form, rendering synthetic fertilizer relatively more susceptible to runoff, especially if the

nutrient uptake capacity of turf and other plants is exceeded. The form of nitrogen in some synthetic fertilizer products also can negatively affect organic matter concentrations necessary for healthy soil. Non-synthetic fertilizers reduce the risks of runoff while increasing organic matter levels.

Pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest, including weeds and other unwanted species. Pesticides can cause harm to humans, animals, or the environment because they are designed to kill or otherwise adversely affect living organisms.

IV. STATEMENT

[Facility's] turf and landscape management policy establishes strategies for a healthy, attractive outdoor environment that includes prevention of weeds, insects, and other unwanted insects, weeds, and disease and that supports management practices protective of public health and the environment.

V. TURF AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PARAMETERS

[Facility] recognizes that a successful turf and landscape management program is generally determined by sound practice that establishes and maintains soil health throughout [facility] grounds. The turf and landscape management program at [facility] is based on the following practices and parameters:

- 1. Development of healthy soil with proper pH.** This will be achieved with an annual soil health assessment and program to build organic matter and adjust pH.
- 2. Planting of well-adapted, pest-resistant grass varieties.** This will be achieved by planting appropriate grass and ornamental varieties that are naturally resistant to insects, fungal diseases, and fluctuations in weather.
- 3. Adoption of proper management practices.** This will be achieved by addressing soil compaction through aeration, dethatching and organic topdressing to reduce susceptibility to insects, disease, and weather stress.
- 4. Utilization of organic fertilization techniques.** This will be achieved with a natural (or organic) slow-release fertilizer formulation, ideally applied once a year (usually in the fall but subject to adjustment based on soil test results), to increase the efficiency of nutrient uptake, reduce nutrient runoff and leaching, and increase the water-holding capacity of the soil.
- 5. Adoption of proper watering methods.** Adopt watering procedures that wet the soil to the depth of the grass root zone, allowing soil to become dry before the

next watering and eliminating more frequent, shorter waterings which promote shallow root systems.

6. **Correct mowing.** Mow with sharp blades set to 3” to minimize adverse effects and retain the lawn’s competitive ability, never cutting off more than 1/3 of the grass blades in a single mowing, rotating the mowing pattern to reduce lawn compaction, and leaving a light layer of grass clippings on the grass, which can provide up to half the lawn’s nitrogen requirement.

VI. APPROVED PESTICIDES

[Facility] will maintain a limited list of pre-approved least-toxic pesticides for use when required (see Attachment 1). Products will be included on the list after careful consideration of hazards. The list will be reviewed annually by the [designated official].

Selection of pre-approved products for use may only be approved after a determination that other preventive and non-chemical means have been exhausted and control measures are needed for health protection. Products will be selected for use only after exhaustion of reasonable mechanical and other nonchemical measures (such as heat, hot water applications, etc.).

Synthetic pesticides are never used for purely cosmetic turf and landscape management purposes at [facility name], and only natural-based materials, such as vinegar, acetic acid, soaps, or essential oils (such as clove oil) can be used when warranted to control unwanted plants (such as weeds) at [facility name].

VII. PESTICIDE APPLICATION AND NOTIFICATION

The practical implication of the above restrictions on cosmetic applications of synthetic products combined with the policy on exhaustion of reasonable nonchemical measures for pest suppression is that, in lieu of extraordinary circumstances, exterior pesticide use at [facility name] is only considered in response to pest emergencies that pose significant and immediate threats to human health, such as stinging insects.

Pesticides are only to be applied in and around [facility] by certified commercial applicators.

If application of a least-toxic pesticide product is selected after reasonable non-chemical alternatives are exhausted, and are scheduled for [facility]’s managed buildings and grounds, the [facility] in coordination with the pest management or land care vendor, shall provide notification to [facility] visitors, patients and employees in the building treated, and in a central location for notification of grounds applications. As pesticides can cause serious acute and long term adverse health effects, [facility] will make every effort to inform all people using the treated areas of such applications. Notification shall include posting pest

management information signs with the date, time and location of the application and the product applied in an appropriate area in order to provide visible notification to patients, visitors and employees. Signage shall include contact information for additional details.

As with all pest infestations, emergency pest problems shall be initially dealt with by using non-chemical interventions. [Facility] allows for limited use of least-toxic pesticides for pest infestations that pose an immediate and serious health threat to the health and safety of patients, visitors or employees where non-chemical interventions have failed to resolve the problem. When [facility] authorizes an emergency pesticide application of a pesticide from the list of pre-approved least-toxic pesticides, [facility] shall provide notification as outlined above within 24 hours of application.

In addition to the above requirements, [facility] must comply with any and all applicable laws regarding special notification of pesticide applications (e.g., pesticide notification registries).

VIII. RECORDKEEPING

[Facility] will maintain detailed records of all chemical pest control treatments for at least three (3) years.

IX. REFERENCES

Integrated Pest Management in Health Care Facilities Project
Maryland Pesticide Network
Beyond Pesticides

Attachment 1

List of approved pesticides for use at [facility] and Reentry Intervals

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