



Amenity Forum

Guidance Note

Water Protection



Introduction

Applying pesticides is often required essential to maintain an acceptable quality in many areas of Amenity such as – roadways, pavements, sports fields, golf courses and other public areas. Products used for these purposes must be authorised to ensure there are no unacceptable effects on the environment, or harmful effects on human health, from their proper use. Operators applying these products must also be properly trained and certificated in their safe handling and application. **Protection of water is a very important part of this.**

“Best Practice” requires all users to **PREVENT ANY FORM OF RUN-OFF** at all times when we are applying pesticides.

It is “Best Practice” to ensure that when we are spraying, that we protect water courses by doing the following:

- Ensure all pesticide applications (sprays and pellets) are made by trained and qualified staff.
- Apply pesticides with care. DO NOT overspray water courses.
- Know the location of drains, watercourses and vulnerable groundwater – see the Environment Agency website to help with the location of such areas.
<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/37793.aspx>
- Site pesticide handling areas carefully away from water sources and drains.
- Always consider integrated approaches first. You will need to consider whether the product needs to be applied or could cultural, nutritional, or biological measures be substituted, or an alternative control technique be used.
- Always try to use targeted treatments.
- Do not apply pesticides when it is raining or windy (greater than 4mph) or when rain is forecast within 24 hours to avoid run-off.
- Consider using a sticker to help prevent run off
- Ensure all equipment is properly maintained, in good working order and regularly calibrated.
- It is good practice to keep a hard or electronic copy of inspections
- Establish at least a 6m grass buffer strip or 5m no spray zone when spraying with a boom sprayer or a minimum 1m buffer zone if using a knapsack sprayer when spraying adjacent to any water course.
- Prevent drift while spraying by using low drift nozzles or shrouded booms whenever possible.
- Safely dispose of all dilute pesticides in accordance with the product label.
- Thoroughly clean all spraying equipment and dispose of washings to an appropriate site in accordance with the product label. Consider the construction of a permanent bund for washing down machinery or use a suitable portable bund.
- Have triple rinsed, clean, empty pesticide containers removed by a reputable disposal company.
- Have an emergency plan and kit available for any spillages.
- Always bear in mind that applications of pesticides in or near water require Environment Agency or Scottish Environment Protection Agency approval.
- Further reading: DEFFRA code of practice “Guidance for the use of herbicides on weeds in or near watercourses and lakes”.