



Amenity Forum

# Golden Rules



# **GOLDEN RULES FOR THOSE MANAGING WEEDS, PESTS AND DISEASES IN AMENITY SPACES & SPORTS SURFACES**

## **1. Get appropriately trained and keep updated**

Users and anyone who causes or permits others to use pesticides have a legal obligation to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to protect human health and the environment. Users must be competent to apply products safely and, by law, other than in very limited circumstances, hold a relevant certificate when using professional products. A similar obligation to demonstrate competence applies to advisers. It is also important to keep updated preferably by operators being on a recognised scheme which requires them to undertake regular training and updating by attendance at events, courses online or in person or through in house workshops and the like.

## **2. Develop and implement integrated approaches to weed, pest & disease management**

Carefully plan pest, weed and disease control strategies. It is good practice to develop an integrated plan for specific situations demonstrating that you have considered fully the level of control required and the range of solutions available including cultural, biological, mechanical as well as pesticides. Your plan will demonstrate that you have chosen the correct mix of approaches. Biological methods are increasingly available and should be considered when developing the appropriate integrated approach. All herbicides approved for use on hard surfaces contain directions for use on the product label stating where the product can be applied. Application on hard surfaces must be targeted. Best practice will always seek to minimise pesticide use and always apply it effectively and efficiently.

## **3. Buy pesticides from reputable distributors.**

This will minimise the risk of purchasing nonapproved or counterfeit products which is against the law. Suppliers should have trained staff available to advise on safe, proper and economic use of products sold. Anyone who is purchasing a professional product must ensure it will be used by someone who holds an appropriate certificate of competence.

## **4. Store pesticides correctly and to meet legal requirements**

These are legal requirements. Use only authorised products and comply with conditions specified on the product label. Similar products can be formulated differently, and so it is crucial that users read and understand how the product must be used and that individual products in a store can be clearly identified and recognised. It is advisable to have recognised trained and qualified storekeepers to ensure best practice.

## **5. Maintain & regularly inspect application equipment**

It is a legal requirement that pesticide application equipment used where the operator has his/ her feet off the ground has to be externally tested annually once it is 5 years old. The test scheme is administered by National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS) and has a network of approved testers across the UK. Whilst other equipment including knapsacks have no such legal requirement, it is best practice to implement a regular inspection system with physical recording. If an incident were to occur, such recording will form an integral element in demonstrating best practice. All equipment must be regularly calibrated to help ensure that there is no under or over-dosing of pesticides and set correctly so that applications are confined to the target area.

## **6. Adopt sustainable practice**

There are national sustainability targets and obligations as well as locally implemented ones. Adopting sustainable practice involves the three pillars of economic, environmental and social factors. It need not be difficult, indeed sustainable practice is best practice and becoming more sustainable is a series of small steps. Ideally it starts with an audit of current practice on which improvements can be made. Increasingly government policy will require organisations to demonstrate their commitment to sustainable practice.

## **7. Protect workers and the public**

It is a legal requirement to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to protect human health when advising on, storing, handling or using pesticides. For example, employees must wear suitable protective equipment and may need their health monitoring. Also the product should not be allowed to drift onto neighbouring properties. It is also a legal requirement in: areas frequented by the public; conservation areas; and on certain transport infrastructure and sealed surfaces to demonstrate use of pesticides is being minimised. Organisations carrying out operations are strongly advised to adopt an approved assurance scheme bringing with it the ability to hold the Amenity Standard to fully demonstrate to the public commitment to very best practice.

## **8. Protect water**

When using plant protection products, care should be taken to avoid pollution of water. Users should determine whether they are in areas such as surface water safeguard zones or drinking water protected areas. You should also take account of weather conditions. Is the wind blowing at a level that may increase the risk of spray drift Is it raining or forecast to rain within the next two days at a level which might result in the pesticide draining into watercourses? You need also to take account surface type. Are you applying to a hard or permeable (soil/grass) surface? Are you taking account of the topography? All such factors are crucial in assessing risks when advising on, storing, handling and/or applying the pesticide. In certain situations, authority to spray close to water courses will require official authorisation from an appropriate body.

## **9. Be prepared for external inspections & regularly check the guidance**

HSE have the powers to inspect premises and practices and undertake such particularly given the implementation of OCR regulations. It is a legal requirement for users of plant protection products either directly or indirectly to register the same with HSE. Such registration supplies information on products used and storage types and locations. It is very important to be prepared for such inspection if and when it may occur. Government and industry bodies provide advice (in paper form and on the internet) to help ensure plant protection products are used safely and sustainably and a key source is the UK Amenity Forum. However there is also a range of advice available in person and awarding bodies can provide information on availability of suitably qualified and trained staff.

## **10. Keep records**

It is a legal requirement for distributors and users to keep records of pesticide sales and use. Clear and accurate records play an important role in helping to assess the effectiveness of plant protection approaches. They are also an important management tool.