



**Town of Swampscott**  
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## **Town of Swampscott Organic Pest Management Policy**

Prepared by the  
Town of Swampscott Board of Health  
Swampscott Pesticide Awareness Committee  
May, 2002  
Revised September 2008

### **SECTION 1: STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The Town of Swampscott agrees with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that “all pesticides are toxic to some degree...,and the commonplace, widespread use of pesticides is both a major environmental problem and a public health issue.”<sup>1</sup>

The Town of Swampscott recognizes that all citizens, particularly children, as well as other inhabitants of our natural environment, have a right to protection from exposure to hazardous chemicals and pesticides in particular.

Furthermore, the Town of Swampscott recognizes that it is in the best interest of public health to eliminate the use of toxic pesticides on Town-owned land and in public buildings; to encourage the reduction and elimination of the toxic pesticides on private property; and to introduce and promote natural, organic cultural and management practices to prevent and, when necessary, control pest problems on Town-owned land, in public buildings, and on private property.

### **SECTION 2: PHILOSOPHY/PRINCIPLES**

The Town of Swampscott hereby adopts the *Precautionary Principle* (as defined by the Wingspread Statement) as the basis for its Organic Pest Management Policy. The Precautionary Principle states “*When an activity raises threats of harm to the environment or human health, precautionary measures should be taken, even if some cause and effect relationships are not yet fully established.*”<sup>2</sup>

### **SECTION 3: STATEMENT OF ACTION**

Be it known that the Town of Swampscott hereby adopts an Organic Pest Management (OPM) Policy which mandates the following:

- That the use and application of toxic chemical pesticides, either by Town of Swampscott employees or by private contractors, is prohibited on all Town-owned lands;
- That natural, organic turf and landscape cultural practices and maintenance shall be the method of choice to understand, prevent, and control potential pest problems;
- That Town of Swampscott employees who work with turf grass and the landscape, employees responsible for pest control in public buildings, and Townspeople in general, all receive access to and/or training in natural, organic turf, landscape, and pest management;
- That a listing of all Town-owned lands affected by this policy be made available to the public;
- That an inventory of all pesticides stored on Town-owned premises be reported to the Board of Health. Proper disposal of prohibited materials will occur through a hazardous waste collection program;
- That pesticide use in and around all school buildings will follow school policy guidelines established in compliance with the Children's Protection Act of 2000, (see Appendix 1). Integrated Pest Management (IPM) guidelines, as defined in the Appendix 2, will be followed for all other public buildings;
- That the use of any pesticide (other than those exempted in paragraph 1 of Appendix 1) in any public building, in any public or private school building, and on any Town-owned land shall be reviewed and approved by the Board of Health.

#### **SECTION 4: PEST AND PESTICIDES DEFINED**

For the purpose of this policy, pests and pesticides are defined as follows. Pests are and may be known as *undesirable* plants, insects, fungi, bacteria, rodents, birds, and other animals. Common examples in turf grass and the landscape can be, but are not limited to, crabgrass, knotweed, poison ivy, chinch bugs, grubs, and a variety of plant pathogens. Common pests in buildings are ants, lice, cockroaches, termites, mice and other rodents that thrive when food and specific conditions are available.

Pesticides are defined by the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture Pesticide Bureau as "substances or mixtures of substances that prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate pests, or defoliate, desiccate, or regulate plants."<sup>3</sup> Pesticides are poisonous substances that can have an adverse effect on the environment or impair human health..."<sup>4</sup> Herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, miticides, avicides, and rodenticides are all considered pesticides.

Under this policy, pesticides classified as known, likely, or probable human carcinogens or probable endocrine disruptors, or those pesticides that meet the criteria for Toxicity Category I (Danger) or Toxicity Category II (Warning), as defined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in section 156.10 of Part 156 of Title 40 of the Code of Federal

Regulations can no longer be applied to any Town of Swampscott lands. Information on a pesticides' regulatory status (Category I or II) can be found at [www.extoxnet.orst.edu/pips](http://www.extoxnet.orst.edu/pips).

## **SECTION 5: ORGANIC PEST MANAGEMENT (OPM) FOR TURF GRASS AND LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, DEFINED**

Organic Pest Management is a problem-solving strategy that prioritizes a natural, organic approach to turf grass and landscape management without the use of toxic pesticides. It mandates the use of natural, organic cultural practices that promote healthy soil and plant life as a preventative measure against the onset of turf and landscape pest problems.

Essential OPM practices include, but are not limited to:

- Regular soil testing;
- Addition of approved soil amendments as necessitated by soil test results, following, but not limited to, the recommendations of NOFA/Mass (Northeast Organic Farmers' Association/Mass) and/or the Organic Material Review Institute of Eugene, OR;
- Selection of plantings and turf grasses using criteria of hardiness; suitability to native conditions; drought, disease and pest resistance; and ease of maintenance;
- Modification of outdoor management practices to comply with organic horticultural science, including scouting, monitoring, watering, mowing, pruning, proper spacing, and mulching;
- The use of physical controls, including hand-weeding and over-seeding;
- The use of biological controls, including the introduction of natural predators, and enhancement of the environment with a pest's natural enemies;
- Through observation, determining the most effective treatment time, based on pest biology and other variables, such as weather and local conditions;
- Eliminating pest habitats and conditions supportive of pest population increases.

**OPM dictates the use of chemical controls only in the event of a public emergency as determined by the Board of Health.**

## **SECTION 6: EXEMPTIONS**

All outdoor pest management activities taking place on Town of Swampscott-owned land shall be subject to this OPM policy, except as follows:

- Pesticides otherwise lawfully used for the purpose of maintaining a safe drinking water supply at drinking water treatment plants and at wastewater treatment plants and related collection, distribution, and treatment facilities.
- Pesticides in contained baits or traps for the purpose of rodent control.

- Pesticides classified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as exempt materials under 40CRF 152.25, or those pesticides of a character not requiring FIFRA regulation.
- Pesticides and larvacides used as part of a mosquito control policy for the Town. This policy will be reviewed yearly by the Board of Health.

## **SECTION 7: OPM OVERSIGHT**

The Board of Health and the Department of Public Works shall oversee and assist in the successful implementation of the OPM policy, to develop an OPM program consistent with Section 5. The Board of Health will seek the participation, advice, and counsel of experts in the fields of organic turf and landscape management and IPM protocol. Broad community participation, including the athletic director, town sports coordinators, the recreation department, parents, PTAs, schools, advocates, and local landscaping businesses will be encouraged.

## **SECTION 8: TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

All Town of Swampscott personnel involved in the evaluation, approval, or implementation of organic turf and landscape maintenance and/or indoor and outdoor pest control shall receive the opportunity to train and/or literature in natural, organic, cultural, and technical methods. Private and public school department personnel will receive information and education regarding the Children's Protection Act of 2000 (see Appendix 1), regarding the use of pesticides in and around school buildings in compliance with this law. Educational seminars, brochures, and flyers will also be made available for the citizens of the Town of Swampscott, with the goal of reducing and eventually eliminating toxic chemicals from private property. This educational effort will be organized by the Board of Health and the Swampscott Pesticide Awareness Committee.

## **SECTION 9: EMERGENCY WAIVERS**

If an emergency situation warrants the use of pesticides which would otherwise not be permitted under this policy, the Town of Swampscott Director of Public Health and/or the Board of Health shall have the authority to grant a temporary waiver for a period of thirty days. Notice of the waiver request shall be given to the Board of Health for advice on resolving the problem without the use of pesticides. The waiver may be extended for an additional period not to exceed six months. Nothing in this waiver provision prohibits the Town of Swampscott from adopting additional waiver resolutions for as long as the condition exists, again not to exceed six months for any individual resolution.

**Any waiver granting the use of pesticides on Town land shall require the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) protocol as it pertains to the least toxic material chosen for any given application (see Addendum 2).**

The Board of Health shall determine if such a waiver is warranted based on the following criteria:

- The pest situation poses a threat to human health and/or environmental quality;
- Viable alternatives consistent with the OPM policy do not exist.

Any Town department or any contractor hired by the Town using a pesticide under such a waiver must comply with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts regarding notification to site users and abutters.

**The members of the Board of Health of the Town of Swampscott, do hereby endorse this Organic Pest Management policy:**

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Lawrence S. Block, M.D., Chairman

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Nelson Kessler

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Martha Dansdill

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances, "Healthy Lawn, Healthy Environment, June, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Wingspread Conference, S. Johnson Foundation, Racine, WI, February, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, Pesticide Bureau Regulations, 333 CMR; 203, Sec. 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, Pesticide Bureau, Regulation Home Page, [www.massdfa.org/pestreg.htm](http://www.massdfa.org/pestreg.htm), March 2000

## **ADDENDUM 1: CHILDREN'S PROTECTION ACT OF 2000**

In May, 2000, Governor Cellucci signed into law "An Act to Protect Children and Families From Harmful Pesticides." This act, implemented by the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, affects all private and public schools, day care centers, and school age child care programs. The major components of the Act to be aware of are:

1. As of November, 2000, pesticides shall not be applied indoors while children are on the property, except for anti-microbial pesticides such as bleach; rodenticides placed in tamper resistant baits; insecticidal baits; ready-to-use dusts, gels, or powder formulation; and certain lower risk pesticides and pesticides classified as exempt materials under 40 CFR 152.25 (also known as the 25B list which includes garlic, mint oil, and citric acid).
2. Pesticides shall not be applied on the outdoor property of a school, day care center, or school age child program while children are located in, on, or adjacent to the area of the pesticide application.
3. All parents, staff and children will have to be provided with standard written notification of any pesticide application that is made outdoors on the property, 48 hours in advance of such application. The notification will also have to be posted in a common area. The

information to be contained in the standard written notification will be obtained from the licensed pesticide applicator who performs the work.

4. While the Act does not require this notification be made for indoor applications of pesticides, the Department of Food and Agriculture recommends that the notification requirements be followed for all indoor pesticide applications except as in the applications described in paragraph 1.
5. Effective January, 2002, an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan must be developed by all schools, daycare centers, and school age child care programs, and submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture.

## **ADDENDUM 2: INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT DEFINED**

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a problem-solving approach to landscape and building management, designed to prevent and control undesirable weeds, insects, fungi, and rodents. IPM relies on the use of site-specific information about environmental conditions and the dynamics of human characteristics and activities, and pest biology and behavior to prevent, resist, and control pests that interfere with the purpose and use of a particular site. When a pest exceeds a predetermined threshold at a particular site, all appropriate pest control strategies are employed including modifying the habitat, modifying maintenance practices, and modifying user behavior. If these common-sense measures fail, non-toxic, then least toxic controls can be employed.

The following steps outline the basic approach used in an IPM program:

- Monitoring and scouting the turf, landscape, or building in question.
- Accurate record-keeping documenting any potential pest problem.
- Evaluation of the site with regard to any injury caused by a pest in question and a determination made on which course of treatment to follow.
- Chosen treatment to be the least damaging to the general environment and one that best preserves the natural ecosystem.
- Chosen treatment to be the most likely to produce long-term reductions in pest control requirements. The effective implementation must be operationally feasible, and must be cost effective in the short and long term.
- Chosen treatment to minimize negative impact to non-targeted organisms.
- Chosen treatment to be the least disruptive of natural controls available.
- Chosen treatment to be the least hazardous to human health.

References on file at the Department of Public Health

