



Environment and Labour

Media Backgrounder Herbicide Management July 2007

Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), is the federal agency responsible for the regulation of pest control products in Canada. As the federal authority under the Pest Control Products Act (PCPA), the PMRA also:

- Develops pest management policies and guidelines;
- Promotes sustainable pest management;
- Looks to improve the regulatory process to increase efficiency;
- Enforces compliance with the PCPA; and,
- Distributes pest management information to the general public and key stakeholders.

Glyphosate is registered with the PMRA for use as a forestry herbicide and other purposes, such as in the production of food crops and residential home and garden use. The agency regularly reviews scientific literature on registered pesticides. **The PMRA can be reached at 613-736-3500 if you have questions about glyphosate or their role.**

Provincial and territorial agencies, such as Nova Scotia Environment and Labour, are responsible for ensuring that registered products are used as specified by the PMRA, with proper care for human health and the environment. Municipalities may also assume some responsibility.

In Nova Scotia, the forestry application of herbicides falls under the jurisdiction of Nova Scotia Environment and Labour. The department requires compliance with the PMRA-registered label and also imposes conditions of its own. The department's requirements for the forestry use of glyphosate include:

- Formal application for permission
- Application of the herbicide to a specified spray zone
- Buffer zones around watercourses and wells
- Proper weather conditions for drift control
- In recognition of the right to know, there must be notification of residents and businesses within 500 metres of the spray area at least 30 days before spraying. This is a notification zone only – not a danger zone.
- Signs advising of the spraying must be posted on access roads to the area 30 days in advance
- The company applying the product must be certified by NSEL

- The person applying the product must pass an examination and be certified by NSEL
- NSEL must be notified when spraying is about to take place

In addition, NSEL can require special conditions where circumstances warrant.

Glyphosate has been determined by the PMRA to be safe when used as directed on the product label and presents a low risk. These conditions imposed on its use are effective management of that risk.

Spraying

The application of glyphosate for forestry, whether from the air or ground, is tightly controlled.

Aerial spray applicators use low-flying helicopters equipped with Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographical Information Systems to ensure the spray lands within the boundaries specified on their permit. The process generates a computer record of where the spray is applied.

Ground-spray applicators are required to flag the spray boundaries and ensure the spray lands within them.

Applicators must meet the same kinds of requirements whether spraying by ground or air, although aerial buffer zones may be larger.

Compliance

Both ground and aerial applicators are required to notify NSEL before they start work on an approved area.

NSEL inspectors can and do arrive at approved sites at any time to monitor the spraying and applicators are aware of that.

NSEL can request the computer records from aerial applications.

Misapplication is obvious from the effect on vegetation.

Citizens are quick to file complaints with NSEL when they believe there is a problem.

Penalties can include loss of certification and fines of up to \$1 million.

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