

Maryland Lawn Fertilizer Law

Impact on SHA Construction Operations

MD Lawn Fertilizer Law

- Only applies to fertilizer on turf:
 - Section 705 – Turfgrass Establishment
 - Section 708 – Turfgrass Sod Establishment
- Does not apply to:
 - Section 704 – Temporary Seed
 - Section 706 – Shrub Seeding
 - Section 707 – Meadow/Wildflower Seeding
 - Section 710 – Tree, Shrub, and Perennials

MD Lawn Fertilizer Law

- Fertilizer Use Impacts
 - Application rates
 - Application dates
 - Application near bodies of water
 - Required Certified Fertilizer Applicators

FERTILIZER APPLICATION RATES

Fertilizer Application Rates

- **Current SHA default fertilizer rate:**
 - 1,000 lb/acre 20-16-12 fertilizer
 - Provides 4.6 lb/1,000 SF of nitrogen
- **New law limits the amount of nitrogen to 0.9 lb / 1,000 SF per application**
 - Requires large reduction in SHA default rate and changes to Nutrient Management Plans

Fertilizer Application Rates

- **New Default Rate:**
 - 200 lb/acre of 20-16-12 fertilizer.
- **Nutrient Management Plans (NMP)**
 - All NMP rates shall be replaced with the new default rate of 200 lb/acre of 20-16-12 fertilizer.
 - Application rates of soil amendments (limestone, sulfur, compost, gypsum) are not affected by this law.
 - Refertilizing may be included in new contracts to provide additional fertilizer.

FERTILIZER APPLICATION DATES

Application Dates

- Current SHA seeding & sodding seasons:
 - Turfgrass Establishment: March 1st – Nov. 30th
 - Turfgrass Sod: Aug. 15th – May 31st when the ground is not frozen.
- Black out period: New law prohibits all fertilizer application from Nov. 15th to March 1st.
 - Do not apply fertilizer to turf (Section 705 & 708) during this ‘black-out period’. **No exceptions.**

APPLICATION NEAR BODIES OF WATER

Applications Near Bodies of Water

- Current SHA Specs do not restrict fertilizer application near bodies of water.
- New regulations prohibit fertilizer within 15 feet of:
 - Existing ponds, manmade or natural.
 - Existing Lakes, Rivers, Streams.
 - It is OK to fertilize SWM ponds, etc. during construction.

Application Near Bodies of Water

- The setback may be reduced from 15 to 10 feet when a drop spreader, rotary spreader with a deflector, or targeted spray liquid is used.
- Fertilizer may be applied in and adjacent to drainage structures, including:
 - Stormwater facilities
 - Ditches
 - Swales
 - Culverts

Note: MDE does not consider these regulated Waters of the State unless designated as a jurisdictional resource.

CERTIFIED FERTILIZER APPLICATORS

Certified Fertilizer Applicators

- New regulations require that all professional fertilizer applicators obtain a fertilizer application certification from the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA)
- Fertilizer applications can only be made:
 - By a certified applicator, or
 - By an employee under the direct supervision of a certified applicator
- These professional requirements are similar to existing pesticide certification laws.

SUMMARY

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- **Applicability**
 - Applies only to Sections 705 & 708
- **Default Fertilizer Rate**
 - Reduced from 1,000 lb to 200 lb/acre of 20-16-12 Fertilizer
 - All NMP rates shall be replaced with the new default rate of 200 lb/acre of 20-16-12 fertilizer
- **‘Black Out Period’**
 - Do not apply fertilizer from Nov. 15th to March 1st.
- **Bodies of Water**
 - Do not apply fertilizer within 15 ft of bodies of water
- **Certified Fertilizer Applicators**
 - All professional fertilizer applicators are required to be certified by MDA