

## REGULATION 637 RULE 11 — POSTING REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL LAWN APPLICATIONS

David M. Gilstrap  
Department of Crop and Soil Sciences  
Michigan State University

Since 1993, Regulation 637 Rule 11 has required that a commercial pesticide applicator performing a broadcast, foliar, or space application to an ornamental or turf site, other than golf courses or sod farms, place a lawn marker sign at the primary point(s) of entry immediately following the application. Markers shall be 4 inches high and 5 inches wide and made of sturdy, water-resistant material. They must be supported in such a way that the bottom of the marker is at least 12 inches from the turf. The background should be white and the letters green with the following specifications:

- 1) the word "CAUTION" in 72-point type,
- 2) the words "Pesticide Application" in 30-point type,
- 3) the statement "Keep off until dry." in 30-point type,
- 4) an illustration of an adult and a child walking a dog with a two-inch "ghost busters" circle superimposed.

Once posted, markers become the property of the homeowner or site manager who can then remove them at anytime, even within 24 hours of application. Lawn care operators usually buy them from their chemical suppliers. With minor differences, the standards for lawn-posting signs are the same for all states that have such laws.

Massachusetts was the first state to impose posting laws, doing so in 1987. This sign was the model for the specifications above. Rhode Island quickly followed suit with posting required for 72 hours following application. To date 19 states have some type of posting regulation, and they are indicated in Figure 1. In New York, excessively stringent guidelines took effect prompting the turf industry in that state to wage a legal battle both at the state and federal levels.



Fig. 1. Map of the United States showing states indicated by shading that have laws requiring lawn posting for pesticide applications.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has drafted posting guidelines for all states in the hope of promoting a nationwide consistency among these laws and ordinances. According to an EPA survey, pesticides are used annually on 26% of all home lawns, or 35 million households. These applications

account for 40% of all insecticides and 50% of the total herbicides used on turf in the U.S. Homeowners were included in these guidelines since they apply more lawn chemicals than professional applicators. These documents were sent to only a few states, and this action does not seem to be going forward at this point. Tom Delaney of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, believes that when posting is effected nationally, it will be done by adding statements to appropriate pesticide labels. This could read as follows, "Home lawns should be posted for 24 hours following application."

Here in Michigan, the Pesticide and Plant Management Division of the Michigan Department of Agriculture has received very few complaints concerning posting. Division manager Brian Rowe urges a common sense approach to posting common entry points. For multiple dwellings, he recommends that you work with the property manager to determine pedestrian traffic patterns. On common areas such as parks and medians, signs should be posted every 50 to 100 feet. Sports fields should to be posted in a similar fashion.

Most lawn care companies are posting signs when fertilizer-only applications are made. This is a method of informing the customer that something has been done. Many companies view this as an advertising opportunity and order custom signs with their name on them. People see the signs and sometimes call the companies and order an application because their neighbors have had a service provided. This is not illegal, according to the MDA. While posting laws were objected to by many in the industry, the process is working well and benefiting all parties concerned.

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