

THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS

Throughout the past few years the Minnesota Legislature has succumb to pressures from environmental groups and others to increase the licensing and training requirements of those of us who apply pesticides to golf courses. Currently all persons applying any pesticide to the property of a golf course are required to be licensed by the state department of agriculture in all of the appropriate categories. Please note that the last sentence said **all persons who apply**. No longer can the Superintendent hold a license and have the applicator operate under that one license. No longer does the law only apply if you are using restricted use pesticides, all pesticides are now covered. It is a whole new ball game.

Many courses either do not have, or are reluctant to get an applicators license. **This is a violation of the law.** Many feel that if they only apply granular products they don't need a license. **This is a violation of the law.** I could go on and on. Anyone who applies pesticides to a golf course property must have a license.

The question then becomes one of economics. Why should I spend \$100 or more to get a license? They never check. Well that may soon change. With the dwindling funds provided by the state for Ag department programs, inspections and the associated fines could make up a nice

income for the department. And just how much are those fines? All I can tell you is that it varies with the severity of the violation. Typically an application of a pesticide without a license could carry a **fine of \$500** for a first time offense, assuming you have done all other things correctly. If you applied product inconsistent with the label you may have crossed a line drawn by the federal government covered by the FIFRA (Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act). This also carries a **fine of \$500** for a first time offense. Stronger penalties may apply if you have disposed of containers improperly; have improper storage, caused environmental harm or any other possible infractions. As well, costly cleanup may need to be done in a worst case scenario.

So the question becomes, is it worth the possible civil and criminal penalties to save \$100. Many may say that that is the cost of doing business; I feel that the cost of doing business is the cost of the license. For the small effort it takes and the few dollars it costs, why not take the high road, license all of your applicators and help us all in saying that the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents are doing their part to protect the environment and provide a safe and healthy place to play golf. -- Paul Eckholm, CGCS

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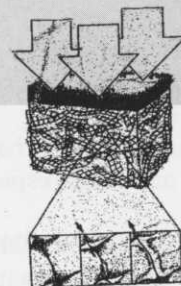
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