

What's it like to be inspected?

WHEN KEENER-SENSENIIG LANDSCAPING, INC. in Newark, Delaware, was inspected, managing partner Dana Ressler says the inspector spent about three hours and did find a variety of violations, but he says, "he wasn't there to get me. He was there to help me." However, he adds that the tone of the encounter could have been different, if the inspector had come because of a complaint or if he had found a pattern of violations that suggested something less than a "good faith" effort to be in compliance.

The inspector checked such things as the company's license and whether its license number was on each of its vehicles and its records of pesticide applications. He pointed out what the company needs to do to correct the deficiencies.

"We didn't have records of the weather conditions on the particular lawns," says Ressler. Local weather reports aren't specific enough, so he says he is now searching for a portable unit that can read the wind speed and take the air temperature at each site. The inspector also found that all of Ressler's employees did not have the required photo-identification cards.

While saying that he thought almost all of the requirements that he had to meet were reasonable, Ressler is also searching for the required back flow protector—to prevent liquid from a tank from being taken up into a hose used to fill the tank. Ressler points out that such a possibility is "freakish," but he is checking farm supply companies in his area to see if he can find the right equipment.

"I don't think it'll take us longer than five minutes per customer to fill out the paperwork," says Ressler. He uses ready-made, commercially available forms, which have spaces for most of the necessary information. Keener-Sensenig works on shrubs as well as lawns, and Ressler says documenting the specifics of applications to shrubs is more involved than documenting applications to lawns because of the variety of ornamental plants.

Ressler supports enforcement actions against people operating without a license or without the proper training, pointing out that substandard operators hurt legitimate companies by unfairly competing against them. Remembering the liability insurance crisis of the mid-1980s, he sees compliance as a form of self-defense.

"It's actually protecting me," he says. ■



Environmental Regulations

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need to get the community outreach and the paperwork rolling early in the process.

According to the study, the major environmental concerns for managers of existing facilities are the availability of water and the use of pesticides, both of which tend to increase operating budgets. In dry, western states and states (like New Jersey) where development has exceeded local resources, water allocation is a controversial and hotly contested issue. Even in states where water use is normally not a problem, drought emergencies and the opposite problem of extensive flood damage can make an issue of water use. All states have emergency plans in place, and many facility managers already have implemented alternatives such as the storage and use of effluent water.

In addition, in their efforts to comply with RCRA, nearly half the states have sought to ease pressures on landfills by banning their use for yard waste, which represents about one-fifth of all solid waste (*see table on page 7*). Mowing, dethatching, pruning, and leaf removal all generate a substantial amount of organic matter—35 millions tons annually, according to the EPA. Increasing amounts of this material are being composted, but only 4.2% of the total volume of yard waste generated. The number of facilities that compost their own yard waste is growing, and so is the number of composting facilities. While there are benefits to this trend, it still represents yet another area of adjustment.

The EPA and organizations such as PLCAA now encourage leaving grass clippings on lawns. There are good reasons for doing so: unlike thatch, which contains high levels of lignin that makes thatch slow to decompose, clippings break down quickly. However, spreading clippings from an area of turf infected