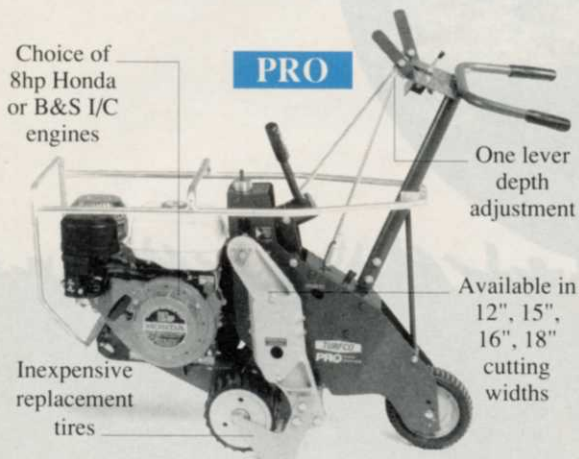


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Circle No. 135 on Reader Inquiry Card

Local notification on hold

AGAWAM, Mass.—In August, one of the town councilors in Agawam, Mass., proposed a law requiring lawn care companies to give three days notice prior to applying pesticides.

The notice, to be delivered via registered mail, would go to neighbors of the property being treated. It would list the chemicals to be used in the application.

The proposal exempts farmers and homeowners from any such requirements.

The councilor says the law

is needed to allow homeowners to remove outdoor furniture and children's toys from sprayed areas.

The councilor's notification proposal hasn't generated much support from colleagues. The proposal is now in council's Ordinance Committee.

It's not likely the matter will be decided upon before year's end, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT was told.

Agawam, with a population 28,000, is a suburb of Springfield.

CUSTOMER SERVICE TIPS

by Ed Wandtke

■ Last month, effective listening ideas were presented to help the customer service person prepare for a customer's call.

This column will focus on speaking or responding to the customer during a phone call.

1. In responding to a customer, use correct industry nomenclature. This will emphasize that you know what you are talking about, and you will remain in charge of the call. Do not repeat incorrect terminology used by the customer.

2. Repeat phrases the customer speaks. This will help establish a confidence that you understand their concern and will be able to help them. If any confusion exists, this will allow the customer to correct your customer service person's mis-interpretation.

3. The tone of your voice is affected by how you sit in your chair when you are talking. Sitting upright will allow your voice to be clear, strong, and confident. Practice this

on the next call you receive.

4. How do you sound to a customer? Are you friendly? Do you come across as a technical individual? Do you speak positively in responding to a customer? Check yourself out. Tape record the next six customer service calls and see how you sound.

5. Speaking at the same speed and with the same volume as the customer will help the customer feel you understand what they are talking about. This will help to avoid rude and abrasive reactions by the customer. When the customer service person is talking, be certain that they think before they speak rather than saying "uh" first.

All this takes practice. The more you evaluate and review the telephone practices of your customer service personnel, the better your company image. Effective telephone technique takes time and needs to be reviewed. Listen to what is being said on the phone and you will hear words which need to be improved upon.