

CHAPTER 100: FERTILIZER USE ON URBAN LANDSCAPE

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§ 100.01 PURPOSE AND INTENT.

(A) This ordinance regulates and promotes the proper use of fertilizers by any applicator; requires proper training of commercial and institutional fertilizer applicators; establishes training and licensing requirements; establishes a prohibited application period; specifies allowable fertilizer application rates and methods; fertilizer-free zones; low maintenance zones; and exemptions.

(B) This ordinance requires the use of Best Management Practices which provide specific management guidelines to minimize negative secondary and cumulative environmental effects associated with the misuse of fertilizers. These secondary and cumulative effects have been observed in and on Palm Bay's natural and constructed stormwater conveyances, ponds, canals, creeks, estuaries and other water bodies. Collectively, these water bodies are an asset critical to the environmental, recreational, cultural and economic well-being of Palm Bay residents and the health of the public. Overgrowth of algae and vegetation hinder the effectiveness of flood attenuation provided by natural and constructed stormwater and drainage conveyances. Regulation of nutrients, including both phosphorus and nitrogen contained in fertilizer, will help improve and maintain water and habitat quality.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.02 DEFINITIONS.

For the purpose of this ordinance, the following terms shall have the meanings set forth unless the context clearly

indicates otherwise:

ADMINISTRATOR. City Manager or designee authorized to administer and enforce the provisions of this ordinance.

APPLICATION or **APPLY.** The actual physical deposit of fertilizer to turf, specialized turf, or landscape plants.

APPLICATOR. Any person who applies fertilizer on turf and/or landscape plants in the City of Palm Bay.

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES. Turf and landscape practices or combination of practices based on research, field-testing, and expert review, determined to be the most effective and practicable on-location means, including economic and technological considerations, for improving water quality, conserving water supplies and protecting natural resources.

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER, OFFICIAL, OR INSPECTOR. Any designated employee or agent of the City of Palm Bay whose duty it is to enforce codes and ordinances enacted by the City of Palm Bay.

COMMERCIAL FERTILIZER APPLICATOR, except as provided in Fla. Stat. § 482.1562(9). Any person who applies fertilizer for payment or other consideration to property not owned by the person or firm applying the fertilizer or the employer of the applicator.

FERTILIZE, FERTILIZING, OR FERTILIZATION. The act of applying fertilizer to turf, specialized turf, or landscape plants.

FERTILIZER. Any substance or mixture of substances that contains one (1) or more recognized plant nutrients and promotes plant growth, or controls soil acidity or alkalinity, or provides other soil enrichment, or provides other corrective measures to the soil.

GUARANTEED ANALYSIS. The percentage of plant nutrients or measures of neutralizing capability claimed to be present in a fertilizer.

INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATOR. Any person, other than a private, non-commercial or a commercial applicator (unless such definitions also apply under the circumstances), that applies fertilizer for the purpose of maintaining turf and/or landscape plants. Institutional applicators shall include, but shall not be limited to, owners, managers or employees of public lands, schools, parks, religious institutions, utilities, industrial or business sites and any residential properties maintained in condominium and/or common ownership.

LANDSCAPE PLANT. Any native or exotic tree, shrub, or groundcover (excluding turf).

LOW MAINTENANCE ZONE. An area a minimum of ten (10) feet wide adjacent to surface waters which is planted and managed in order to minimize the need for fertilization, watering, mowing, etc.

PASTURE. Land used for livestock grazing that is managed to provide feed value.

PERSON. Any natural person, business, corporation, limited liability company, partnership, limited partnership, association, club, organization, and/or any group of people acting as an organized entity.

PROHIBITED APPLICATION PERIOD. The time period during which a flood watch or warning, or a tropical storm watch or warning, or a hurricane watch or warning is in effect for any portion of Brevard County, issued by the National Weather Service, or if heavy rain is expected.

RESTRICTED APPLICATION PERIOD. The time period from June 1 to September 30.

SATURATED SOIL. A soil in which the voids are filled with water. Saturation does not require flow. For the purposes of this ordinance, soils shall be considered saturated if standing water is present or the pressure of a person standing on the soil causes the release of free water.

SLOW RELEASE, CONTROLLED RELEASE, TIMED RELEASE, SLOWLY AVAILABLE, OR WATER INSOLUBLE NITROGEN. Nitrogen in a form which delays its availability for plant uptake and use after application, or which extends its availability to the plant longer than a reference rapid or quick release product.

SURFACE WATERS as defined by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Chapter 62-340, Florida Administrative Code). Waters on the surface of the earth, contained in bounds created naturally or artificially, including, the Atlantic Ocean, bays, bayous, sounds, estuaries, lagoons, lakes, ponds, impoundments, rivers, streams, springs, creeks, branches, sloughs, tributaries, canals, and ditches.

TURF, SOD, OR LAWN. A piece of grass-covered soil held together by the roots of the grass.

URBAN LANDSCAPE. Pervious areas on residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, highway rights-of-way, or other nonagricultural lands that are planted with turf or horticultural plants. For the purposes of this section, agriculture has the same meaning as in Fla. stat. § 570.02.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.03 APPLICABILITY.

This ordinance shall be applicable to and shall regulate any and all applicators of fertilizer and areas of application of fertilizer within the City of Palm Bay, unless such applicator is specifically exempted by the terms of this ordinance from the regulatory provisions of this ordinance. This ordinance shall be prospective only and shall not impair any existing contracts.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.04 TIMING OF FERTILIZER APPLICATION.

No applicator shall apply fertilizers containing nitrogen and/or phosphorus to turf and/or landscape plants during the prohibited application period or to saturated soils. In addition, no fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorus shall be applied to turf or landscape plants during the restricted application period, defined as June 1 to September 30.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.05 FERTILIZER FREE ZONE.

Fertilizer shall not be applied within ten (10) feet of any surface waters, pond, stream, watercourse, lake, canal, or wetland as defined by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Chapter 62-340, Florida Administrative Code) or within ten (10) feet from the top of a seawall. Newly planted turf and/or landscape plants may be fertilized in this zone for a sixty (60) day period beginning thirty (30) days after planting if needed to allow the plants to become well established. Caution shall be used to prevent direct deposition of nutrients into the water. The requirements of § 100.04 also apply to newly planted turf and landscape plants.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.06 LOW MAINTENANCE ZONE.

A voluntary ten (10) foot low maintenance zone is strongly recommended, but not mandated, from any surface waters, pond, stream, watercourse, lake, wetland or from the top of a seawall. A swale/berm system is recommended for installation at the landward edge of this low maintenance zone to capture and filter runoff. No mowed or cut vegetative material should be deposited or left remaining in this zone or deposited in the water. Care should be taken to prevent the over-spray of aquatic weed products in this zone.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.07 FERTILIZER CONTENT AND APPLICATION RATES.

(A) Only "No Phosphate Fertilizer" as defined in Rule 5E-1.003(2), Florida Administrative Code, Labeling Requirements for Urban Turf Fertilizers, may be applied to turf or landscape plants in the City of Palm Bay without a soil or plant tissue deficiency as verified by a University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences, approved testing methodology. In the case that a deficiency has been verified, the application of a fertilizer containing phosphorous shall be in accordance with the rates and directions provided by Rule 5E-1.003(2), Florida Administrative Code. Deficiency verification shall be no more than two (2) years old. However, recent application of compost, manure, or top soil shall warrant more recent testing to verify current deficiencies.

(B) The nitrogen content of fertilizer applied to turf or landscape plants within the City of Palm Bay shall contain at least fifty percent (50%) slow release, controlled release, timed release, slowly available, or water insoluble nitrogen per

guaranteed analysis label. Caution shall be used to prevent direct deposition of nutrients in the water.

(C) Fertilizers applied to turf within the City of Palm Bay shall be applied at rates that are in accordance with requirements and directions provided by Rule 5E-1.003(2), Florida Administrative Code, Labeling Requirements For Urban Turf Fertilizers.

(D) Fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorus shall not be applied before seeding or sodding a site, and shall not be applied for the first thirty (30) days after seeding or sodding, except when hydro-seeding for temporary or permanent erosion control in an emergency situation (wildfire, etc.), or in accordance with the stormwater pollution prevention plan for that site.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.08 APPLICATION PRACTICES.

(A) Spreader deflector shields are required when fertilizing via rotary (broadcast) spreaders. Deflectors must be positioned such that fertilizer granules are deflected away from all impervious surfaces, fertilizer-free zones, surface waters and water bodies, including wetlands.

(B) Fertilizer shall not be applied, spilled, or otherwise deposited on any impervious surfaces.

(C) Any fertilizer applied, spilled, or deposited, either intentionally or accidentally, on any impervious surface shall be immediately and completely removed to the greatest extent practicable and either legally applied to turf or any other legal site, or returned to the original or other appropriate container.

(D) In no case shall fertilizer be washed, swept, or blown off impervious surfaces into stormwater drains, ditches, conveyances, or water bodies.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.09 MANAGEMENT OF GRASS CLIPPINGS AND VEGETATIVE MATTER.

In no case shall grass clippings, vegetative material, and/or vegetative debris either intentionally or accidentally, be washed, swept, or blown off into surface waters, stormwater drains, ditches, conveyances, watercourses, water bodies, wetlands, sidewalks, or roadways. Any material that is accidentally so deposited shall be immediately removed to the maximum extent practicable.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.10 EXEMPTIONS.

(A) The provisions set forth in this ordinance shall not apply to:

(1) Bona fide farm operations as defined in the Florida Right to Farm Act, Fla. Stat. § 823.14, provided that fertilizers are applied in accordance with the appropriate Best Management Practices Manual adopted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Office of Agricultural Water Policy for the crop in question.

(2) Other properties not subject to or covered under the Florida Right to Farm Act that have pastures used for grazing livestock provided that fertilizers are applied in accordance with the appropriate Best Management Practices Manual adopted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Office of Agricultural Water Policy for the crop in question.

(3) Any lands used for scientific research supported by an accredited institution of higher learning or a government entity, including, but not limited to, research on the effects of fertilizer use on urban stormwater, water quality, agronomics, or horticulture.

(4) Vegetable gardens provided they are not within ten (10) feet of any water body and/or wetland.

(5) Yard waste, compost, mulches or other similar materials that are primarily organic in nature and are applied to improve the physical conditions of the soil.

(6) Golf courses, parks and athletic fields subject to and implementing Best Management Practices as prescribed in Rule 5E-1.003(2)(d), Florida Administrative Code.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.11 TRAINING.

(A) Prior to January 1, 2014, all commercial and institutional applicators of fertilizer within the incorporated and unincorporated area of Brevard County, shall abide by and successfully complete the six-hour training program in the "Florida-Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Resources by the Green Industries" offered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection through the University of Florida Extension "Florida-Friendly Landscapes" program or an approved equivalent.

(B) Private, non-commercial applicators are encouraged to follow the recommendations of the University of Florida IFAS Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program when applying fertilizers.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.12 COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATORS.

(A) Upon enactment, all commercial applicators of fertilizer conducting business within the City of Palm Bay shall abide by and have successfully completed training and continuing education requirements in the "Florida-Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Resources by the Green Industries," offered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection through the University of Florida IFAS "Florida-Friendly Landscapes" program or an approved equivalent program prior to obtaining a business tax receipt for any category of occupation which may apply any fertilizer to turf and/or landscape plants. Commercial fertilizer applicators shall provide proof of completion of the program to the City of Palm Bay Finance Department upon application or renewal of the business tax receipt.

(B) Upon enactment, all commercial applicators of fertilizer within the City of Palm Bay shall have and carry in their possession at all times when applying fertilizer, evidence of certification by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a commercial fertilizer applicator pursuant to Rule 5E-14.117(18), Florida Administrative Code.

(C) Institutional applicators who apply fertilizer to turf and/or landscape plants (including but not limited to residential lawns, golf courses, commercial properties, and multi-family and condominium properties) must ensure that at least one (1) employee has a "Florida-Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Resources by the Green Industries" training certificate prior to the business owner obtaining a business tax receipt. Owners for any category of occupation which may apply any fertilizer to turf and/or landscape plants shall provide proof of completion of the program to the City of Palm Bay Finance Department.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.13 USE OF PENALTY AWARDS.

Fines collected shall be deposited in a trust dedicated to fulfill the purposes of this section. Funds generated by penalties imposed under this section shall be used by the City for the administration and enforcement of Fla. Stat. § 403.9337, and the corresponding sections of this ordinance and to further water conservation and nonpoint pollution prevention activities.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.14 PENALTY; ADDITIONAL REMEDIES.

Penalties for violations of this ordinance shall be written warnings for the first two (2) violations and subsequent violations shall be two hundred dollars (\$200.00) per day, per occurrence, or any other appropriate remedy provided by law. The City may seek enforcement action against both the owner of record and any person or entity responsible for carrying out any prohibited action. The provisions of this section are an additional and supplemental means of enforcing the City's codes and ordinances. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the City from enforcing this ordinance by injunctive relief or by any other means provided by law.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.15 APPEALS.

Appeals relating to any administrative decision or determination concerning implementation or application of the provisions of this ordinance shall be filed in writing within thirty (30) calendar days after the decision is rendered by the Administrator. Requests for appeals will be considered by the City Manager.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.16 CONFLICTING ORDINANCES.

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed and all ordinances or parts of ordinances not in conflict herewith are hereby continued in full force and effect.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)

§ 100.17 EFFECTIVE DATE.

(A) A certified copy of this ordinance shall be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State, State of Florida, within ten (10) days of enactment. This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption and filing as required by law.

(B) For commercial and institutional applicators, the dates required for compliance are stipulated in §§ 100.11 and 100.12 of this ordinance.

(C) Enforcement of all other requirements will begin six (6) months after the effective date to facilitate implementation.

(Ord. 2014-16, passed 5-15-14)