

## RISK AND BENEFIT INFORMATION FOR PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS

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**NOTICE TO CUSTOMER:** Please ask your applicator about special preparations you may need to make (yard, house, pool) prior to application, and other precautionary measures specific to the material applied.

**DEFINITION OF A PESTICIDE** A pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended to control pest infestations. The word "pesticide" is an umbrella term for products that control a wide range of pests. Pests commonly found include weeds, insects, diseases, mites and rodents. Pesticides designed to control these types of pests are called herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, miticides, or rodenticides. Another groups of pesticides called plant growth regulators are used to manage the growth of plants in the landscape. State and federal laws require that pesticides must be applied in accordance with label directions. Labels direct users as to how, where and at what rate the material must be applied. Upon request, your applicator will supply you with a label of the material applied.

**HOW PESTICIDES WORK** Products intended for use on your property may be applied as a liquid, dust, aerosol, granule, bait or fumigant and are generally active for a few minutes to a few months. Some compounds control pests on contact by damaging the physical structure of the pest. Other compounds become active only after they are absorbed or ingested. They then interfere with physical development or prevent the pest from reproducing. Pesticides may be effective against a large class of organisms or may be specific to particular organisms. This means that applicators can often choose an effective pesticide or pest control strategy that will minimize potential impact to humans, pets or non-target organisms.

**WHY PESTICIDES ARE USED** Pesticides are a tool people use to protect crops, homes, animals, structures, or ornamental plants from pest damage. Examples are protection of buildings from termites, turf from weeds or insects, utility right-of-way areas from damaging trees, and indoor environments from invasion of insects or rodents. Pesticides may be used to control mosquito or gypsy moth populations, to protect food crops or control weeds in lakes and ponds.

**GENERAL TOXICITY INFORMATION** Toxicity is the measure of a substance to cause harm. Health risks from pesticides are generally related to the amount of exposure and the toxicity of the compound. Pesticides can enter the body by ingestion, inhalation, or absorption through the skin. One of the most effective ways of reducing exposure is by restricting access to the treated area. There are two broad classes of pesticides established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency – general use products and restricted use products. General use products are usually considered to have a lower toxicity or risk than restricted use pesticides, and have fewer restrictions regarding who may purchase or use the products. The general public may purchase and use general use products. Restricted use products can be purchased and used only by state certified applicators. The majority of materials used in and around homes are general use pesticides.

**COMMON SENSE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AND SITE PREPARATION** • Do not enter the treatment area while an application is in progress. Remain out of the treated area until the time period specified by the applicator has expired. Additional supervision may be needed for small children. • If food crops are treated there may be a pre-harvest interval during which you may not harvest the crop. • For indoor applications – put away food, children's toys and clothing, cover fish tanks, and remove pets. • For outdoor applications – put away children's toys and any clothing drying on a line, remove pets, cover or discard water for pets and in birdbaths, and ensure that applicators know if there are areas, such as children's play areas, that should not be treated. • Persons on prescription medications including Tagomet and Dilantin, should contact their doctor regarding possible drug-pesticide interactions. Persons with medical conditions such as asthma should contact their doctor about possible implications.

**ENVIRONMENTAL FATE OF PESTICIDES** Exposure to light, heat and other environmental factors cause pesticides to deteriorate. The amount of time that it takes to break down the pesticide depends on temperature, humidity, light, moisture conditions and other factors. As a result, degradation times are highly variable depending on the compound and environmental situation. Generally those pesticides that are the most effective and least persistent should be selected by your applicator.

**IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE AN UNUSUAL REACTION** If you have a reaction due to exposure, immediately wash the exposed areas with soap and water. Go to the nearest doctor or hospital. Do not drive yourself. Take any information you may have regarding the pesticide used, including a copy of the customer information provided to you by the commercial pesticide applicator. Have your doctor obtain emergency information about the pesticide you may have been exposed to by calling the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222 or by calling the National Pesticide Telecommunications Hotline at 800858-7378, or get information online at [www.npic.orst.edu](http://www.npic.orst.edu).