

Ontario Bill 64 on the use of pesticides and its effect on Garrison

This March bill 64 went into effect banning the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes.

Golf has a qualified exemption to the prohibition of registered pesticide application to landscape environments. We will be allowed to treat “playing surfaces” only. This means that flowerbeds, clubhouse and Proshop landscaping cannot be treated with these products.

We must become registered in an IPM (Integrated Pest Management) program as offered through Ridgeway College. This is not the same as our Audubon program though there is significant overlap.

Every golf course must have at least one accredited “agent” for the IPM program. This person implements and maintains the course IPM program and will be responsible for compliance. The agent reports usage to the accreditation authority (Ministry of Environment) and must pass a written exam before becoming a full agent. To maintain accreditation the agent must obtain a minimum of 8 CEC (Continuing Education Credits) per year in ministry-approved subjects. The agent accreditation remains with the agent rather than the course so if the agent leaves the course is out of compliance until another agent is retained. All documentation produced by the agent would remain the property of the course and thus bringing the course back into compliance would be fairly straightforward. We have already qualified an agent this year.

A year following registration the course must be in IPM compliance. This means an auditable set of annual records (including but not limited to: all pesticide applications and areas involved, scouting reports, calibration sheets, annual hot spots identified etc.). These will be relayed to the IPM implementation authorities plus some must be posted in a public location and in a publicly accessible website. This gets us to accreditation Lvl 1.

After 3 years (and every 3 years thereafter) the MoE will conduct an on site audit of your records and practices. Successful passing of this audit gets us to Lvl 2.

Following Lvl 2 accreditation the course will have to conduct an annual public meeting to detail our pesticide usage. This meeting is open to all who are interested however the course is obliged to specifically contact anyone who resides within 100 meters of the treated property to inform them of the date and time of the meeting. The meeting is an information session and should include a feedback component. At the moment the course is not obliged to accede to any particular request from the public as long as it remains in compliance with legislation.

Timeline:

- March 31 2009 –regulations come into effect
- March 2010 – all golf courses must be registered in the IPM program with agents in place
- March 2012 – all golf courses must be fully accredited (Lvl 2)

- March 2013 – all golf courses must conduct an annual public meeting regarding their usage of registered products

In Sum:

We will still be able to treat our course and keep fungi and insects from destroying our greens. Much of the required documentation is already in place from our records and the other documents will be a matter of good recordkeeping of processes that we already do (i.e. disease scouting).

On the above timeline we have, as of August 17 2009, qualified an agent. I have taken and passed the necessary examination on July 14 in Belleville. You will notice that we are posting applications of pesticides on our website in the maintenance notes section. I have already acquired the CEC needed for this year. We are already recording our scouting surveys and will be standardizing our forms for this purpose. We will also look at qualifying Garrisons Assistant Superintendent Matt Giffin.

