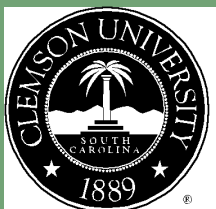


A Guide for Homeowners

Clemson University Department of Pesticide Regulation



Department of Pesticide Regulation

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Bulletin 28

Ready to hire a lawn care service? Read this first!

Some say lawns and gardens are a form of autobiography. If so, we know you don't want yours to end in the middle of the most important chapter! If it seems like your prize hydrangeas are having writer's block or your Bermudagrass has become the unfortunate victim of a plot twist, you may be considering hiring a professional lawn care service to fill in the blanks. The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) can help. If other methods such as biological or environmental controls don't give you the results you want, the information in this bulletin may help you better understand the different lawn care companies and the various types of services they offer.

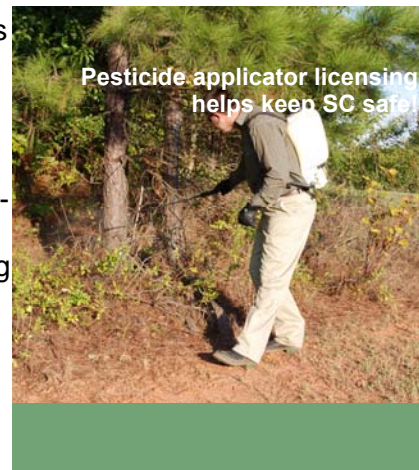
Choosing a lawn care service can be an overwhelming task. During the spring and summer months, new lawn care services seem to pop up almost as quickly as the dandelions! Lawn care services can be large, franchised businesses with permanent locations and many vehicles, or they may be small operations with only one or two individuals doing business out of their homes. There are also many seasonal and part-time businesses offering lawn care services. Some of them offer chemical treatments (with herbicides, insecticides, and other pesticides), and some don't.

Who's Supposed to Have a License?

Any lawn care service (or individual) that applies chemicals to your lawn or landscape for compensation of any type must have a valid South Carolina pesticide applicator's license in Turf and Ornamental Pest Control (SC Category 3).

They can only be licensed after taking and passing a comprehensive two-part exam and after demonstrating financial responsibility by carrying at least the minimum amount of insurance.

These requirements are the same even if a service claims only to spray "a little Round-Up® now and then" around your yard! Please note that mowing, raking, pruning, leaf blowing, and other similar services and/or applying fertilizer does **not** require a service or individual to have a pesticide applicator's license.



Operating without a license is a violation of South Carolina law. Licensing ensures that the service or individual you have hired is able to identify correctly the pest or problem affecting your lawn and/or garden and is able to advise you on the best and most effective course of treatment. If chemicals must be applied as part of his or her recommended treatment plan, licensing also ensures that the service or individual knows how to apply the right type of chemical as safely and as effectively as possible, with little or no effect on non-target organisms.

Why Does an Applicator's License Matter?

The licensing exam establishes a minimum level of competency, and the re-certification requirements of the license make sure that the applicator attends training and keeps up with changes in the chemistry, procedures, and other technology of their industry.

Lawn care services or individuals illegally operating without a state license may use the wrong chemical or may apply too much of a chemical. Miscalculations of chemicals or applying a chemical in the wrong location may harm your lawn or ornamental plants, causing them to look unsightly or even die. Additionally, miscalculations may harm or kill beneficial plants and insects, as well as other wildlife such as migratory birds—even your pets.

The importance of selecting a licensed lawn care professional cannot be stressed enough. It is important to find someone who will not only treat your lawn and garden properly from the start, but also will do a good job inspecting it. We support using biological, mechanical, and environmental controls whenever possible before using chemicals. However, if your problem cannot be solved without using chemicals, a licensed lawn care professional will ensure that the right types of chemicals are being applied correctly—and at the right time of year.



Don't let a beautiful yard
"grow" bad—
Use a licensed lawn care service!

Not Just Applying Chemicals

It is important to note that turf and ornamental pest control activities also includes the soliciting, advertising, or making of sales proposals in any form for any services involving the use of herbicides, insecticides, or other pesticides or for any services involving the use of any device with the intent to prevent, destroy, repel, or otherwise mitigate any pest of turf or ornamental plantings. Please see the South Carolina Rules and Regulations for the Enforcement of the SC Pest Control Act, available for download on our website at dpr.clemson.edu.

How Do I Know if They're Licensed?

Licenses can be verified on the DPR website at regfocus.clemson.edu/dpr/. All lawn care professionals who are licensed by the Department of Pesticide Regulation are required to have a yellow departmental decal on each side of their vehicle. Employees of lawn care services (who apply chemicals) must either be licensed or work under the supervision of a licensed applicator.

What's the Best Way to Choose a Lawn Care Service?

We suggest the following tips when choosing a lawn care service:

- _____ Call the department to learn whether a service has a history of violations or visit the online enforcement history database at regfocus.clemson.edu/dpr/greenbook.htm.
- _____ Get several bids from different lawn care services. Bids are usually free.
- _____ Ask friends and neighbors to recommend a service.
- _____ Trust your instincts! If the individual or service you are dealing with does not treat you with courtesy and professionalism, find another service!

Persons who need assistance or who believe a violation may have occurred are advised to contact our main office at 864.646.2150.

Anderson..... 843.494.2332
Aynor..... 843.957.1727
Beaufort..... 843.255.6060 Ext 111
Charleston..... 843.225.7065
Clemson..... 803.260.1462
Columbia..... 803.736.7680 Ext 112

Florence..... 843.667.1393
Newberry..... 803.403.7262
North Myrtle Beach..... 843.360.1512
York..... 803.628.0303

