

Parks, Building, and Grounds Division Herbicide Application Policy

City of Sandpoint

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear standards for the safe, limited, and responsible use of herbicides and pesticides by the City of Sandpoint Parks, Building, and Grounds Division. This policy is intended to protect public health, park users, pets, and the natural environment while allowing staff to maintain safe and functional public spaces.

All herbicide and pesticide use shall comply with applicable federal and state laws, including the EPA-approved product label, which constitutes the legally binding instructions for pesticide use.

2. Guiding Principles

The City recognizes that vegetation and pest management in public spaces requires balancing environmental stewardship, public safety, and operational maintenance.

- Herbicides will be used only when necessary and in a targeted manner where mechanical removal or other management practices are impractical or ineffective.
- Pesticides (non-herbicide) will be used rarely and only when necessary to address specific pest issues that cannot be controlled through non-chemical means.

Pesticide applications, when required, are typically limited to buildings, building perimeters, and utility chases, and shall not be applied to turf or recreational grass areas.

Herbicides and pesticides will never be broadcast over turf or applied in areas where people are actively recreating on grass.

3. Authorized Products

The Parks, Building, and Grounds Division currently uses the herbicide Martin's Eraser Max Super Concentrate, applied with the surfactant Ad-Max 90, for targeted vegetation control.

These products are applied strictly in accordance with EPA-approved label instructions, including all mixing, handling, application, and safety requirements.

From time to time, operational needs, product availability, environmental considerations, or regulatory changes may require the Division to use alternative herbicide products or adjuvants. The Parks, Building, and Grounds Division may substitute alternative products when appropriate, provided that:

- The product is registered for use under federal and state pesticide regulations;
- The product is applied only in locations authorized under this policy;
- The product is applied strictly according to the EPA-approved label; and
- Use of the product is consistent with the environmental protections, notification requirements, and application restrictions established in this policy.

Any alternative product used shall be documented in the Division's herbicide application records.

4. Authorized Application Locations

Herbicides: Herbicide application is limited to specific non-turf locations where weed growth cannot be effectively controlled through mechanical methods.

Authorized locations include:

- Paver areas
- Downtown planter beds
- Sand infields of baseball and softball fields
- Gravel areas used for storage of parks or maintenance equipment

Herbicides shall not be applied to turf fields or grassy areas, including park lawns, sports fields, or other turf surfaces used for recreation.

Herbicides shall not be used to control weeds along fence lines, around the bases of trees, or in similar locations where those areas are adjacent to or located within turf field areas. In these locations, weed control shall be accomplished using mechanical methods such as trimming, mowing, or manual removal.

Pesticides (Non-Herbicide): Application is limited to:

- Interior building spaces
- Building perimeters and foundations
- Utility chases and structural voids
- Other confined or controlled structural environments

Prohibited Locations (All Chemicals):

- Turf areas, lawns, and sports fields
- Areas of active recreation
- Naturalized park areas unless specifically authorized under an integrated pest management (IPM) determination

5. Environmental Protection Standards

To protect water quality and sensitive environmental areas, the following restrictions and Best Management Practices (BMPs) apply:

Setbacks and Prohibitions

- No herbicide or pesticide application shall occur in waterways, wetlands, or surface waters.
- No application shall occur within twenty-five (25) feet minimum of any waterway, wetland, pond, or drainage feature.
- A greater buffer distance shall be used where site conditions increase risk (e.g., slope, soil permeability, proximity to stormwater infrastructure).

Wetlands and Sensitive Areas

- Applications are prohibited within wetlands and wetland buffers except under explicit regulatory approval.
- Extra caution shall be exercised near riparian corridors, shorelines, and stormwater conveyance systems.

Drift and Runoff Prevention (BMPs)

Applicators must implement BMPs including:

- Use of low-pressure, coarse droplet spray techniques
- Avoidance of application during any conditions that may promote drift
- Use of physical barriers or shields when appropriate
- Immediate cessation of application if drift toward water or sensitive areas is observed

Stormwater Protection

- No application shall occur near storm drains, catch basins, or drainage conveyances where runoff could carry chemicals to surface waters.
- Applications shall not occur on impervious surfaces where runoff is likely.

Weather Restrictions (Enhanced)

In addition to existing restrictions:

- Applications are prohibited if precipitation is forecast within a timeframe that could result in runoff.
- Soil saturation conditions that increase runoff risk shall prohibit application.

6. Weather and Environmental Conditions

Herbicides shall only be applied under suitable weather conditions that minimize drift and maximize safe drying time.

Applications are prohibited under the following conditions:

- Windy conditions
- Rain or forecasted rain during the application window
- Dewy conditions or when vegetation is wet
- Any weather condition that could cause spray drift or runoff

To reduce exposure risk, applications should generally occur during warmer daytime conditions when the product can dry quickly.

7. Public Notification and Access Control

To ensure transparency and protect park users:

- Public notices shall be posted at least seventy-two (72) hours prior to herbicide application in the affected area.
- Notices shall identify that herbicide treatment is scheduled and specify the general treatment area.
- Access to the immediate treatment area shall be restricted during spraying.
- Treated areas shall not be reopened until the spray has fully dried, consistent with label guidance.

8. Application Practices

All herbicide and pesticide use must follow best management practices, including:

- Targeted spot treatment rather than broad area application
- Strict adherence to label dilution rates
- Measures to prevent spray drift and runoff
- Avoidance of overspray onto unintended surfaces or vegetation
- Selection of the least toxic, most targeted product available for the intended use

Applications shall be conducted by trained personnel familiar with pesticide handling requirements and the product label.

9. Compliance with Product Label

The EPA-approved product label provides legally enforceable instructions governing pesticide use. All herbicide applications conducted by City staff must follow the label directions, including:

- Mixing and dilution instructions
- Personal protective equipment requirements
- Application methods and restrictions
- Environmental precautions
- Storage and disposal requirements

Failure to follow label directions is a violation of federal pesticide law.

10. Recordkeeping

The Parks, Building, and Grounds Division shall maintain records of herbicide applications, including:

- Date of application
- Location treated
- Product used
- Weather conditions
- Applicator responsible

These records support transparency, compliance, and operational accountability.

11. Policy Review

This policy may be reviewed periodically by City staff and updated as needed to reflect evolving best practices, regulatory requirements, or direction from the Sandpoint City Council.

12. Integrated Pest Management Approach

The City shall prioritize non-chemical methods for vegetation and pest control, including:

- Mechanical removal
- Cultural practices (e.g., mowing, sanitation, habitat modification)
- Preventative maintenance

Chemical controls (herbicides or pesticides) shall be used only as a last resort when other methods are ineffective or impractical.