

# Q & A about the use of Pesticides in Our Schools...



*The Washington State Legislature requires all school districts to adopt a pesticide policy and related procedures for implementing the policy. The following information is provided to help answer questions regarding the use of pesticides in Camas schools.*

*In acting on this policy, it is our intent to take steps that will promote a safe and healthy environment to our students and our community. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Harvey Keene at 817-4400.*

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## **WHAT STEPS ARE TAKEN TO ASSURE THE LEAST AMOUNT OF EXPOSURE TO PESTICIDES?**

Prior to the application of any pesticide, the district examines preventative and alternative methods. For instance, district maintenance personnel and custodians clean exterior surfaces, such as walls and windows, and only apply pesticides as a last resort. Cleaning these surfaces helps keep the number of spiders and insects at minimal levels and provides for a neater building appearance.

## **WHAT IS THE NOTIFICATION PROCESS REGARDING PESTICIDES?**

Following is the district's policy related to notification of the use of pesticides:

- 1) A determination is made that a pesticide application may be needed. An example situation might be that there are an increasing number of broadleaf weeds in an athletic field.
- 2) The district Maintenance Director holds a review of procedures. The district Safety Committee oversees these procedures. The review includes a discussion of likely causes for the situation and alternatives available to effectively

deal with it. One of our goals is minimal application of pesticides.

- 3) A determination is made to apply a pesticide.
- 4) Signage is posted at least 48 hours prior to the application of the pesticide. The signage includes information about the purpose of the application, the pesticide to be applied, and the time it will occur.
- 5) Parents and students who may use the area in which the pesticide is to be applied are contacted via a school letter.
- 6) Those who have specifically requested a personal notice are contacted (each school has a form that parents and students may fill out if you wish).
- 7) The pesticide is applied using all appropriate safeguards. Applications are made when there is little likelihood of exposure to area users (vacation periods, weekends, and holidays).
- 8) A log of this action is completed.
- 9) The Safety Committee completes a review of the pesticide application.

## **WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS OF USING PESTICIDES?**

While the use of pesticides is minimal, there are some concerning issues surrounding pesticide use

and the potential harm to people and the environment if the pesticide is not used properly. When applied, we use the minimum amount necessary to be effective. The opportunity for exposure to students and staff is very limited. Only trained staff are allowed to apply the pesticides.

**WHAT KINDS OF PESTICIDES ARE USED ON DISTRICT PROPERTY?**

“Pesticides” not only include chemical agents that impact pests, but also those chemicals commonly referred to as herbicides that impact plants. What we are typically talking about is lawn fertilizer. Besides applying a minimal amount of fertilizer to our lawns, we utilize several preventative practices such as aeration, mulching, soil improvements, and re-seeding. To reduce the need for the application of herbicides and our need to weed, we are continuing to expand our use of composting. Applications of actual insecticides are minimal.

**ARE THERE TIMES WHEN THE DISTRICT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GIVE TIMELY NOTIFICATION?**

There are very few diversions from the normal notification process. An exception might be the sudden discovery of something that is potentially very serious, such as a yellow-jacket nest located on a school building. Because of the number of students, staff and patrons with serious allergies to insect stings, we might need to spray without giving a full 48-hour notice. If such a situation arose, we would provide notice as soon as possible.

If you would like to receive a full copy of our pesticide policy and procedures, please contact our district office and ask for a copy of Policy and Procedures #6895. If you would like to discuss either the policy or procedures, you may contact Dick Essex, Director of Maintenance.

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*If you wish to be contacted prior to the application of any pesticide in the school or school area that you have a student attending the form below must be completed and returned to the school office. (Complete one form for each school - additional forms are available at school offices.) Personnel will keep this form on file and will contact you prior to any pesticide application at the school or vicinity.*

**Registration Form for Pesticide Application Notification**

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (night)

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_