



**City of Sunnyvale  
Department of Public Works  
Parks Division  
INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN**



## **PESTICIDE USE IN PARKS**

The term "pesticide" covers a wide variety of products, including those that control insects (insecticides), weeds (herbicides), rodents (rodenticides), and fungus (fungicides). Public awareness and concern regarding pesticide use has grown significantly over the past few years.

Our goals relative to landscape maintenance and other tasks involving pesticide use include the pursuit of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). In other words, we integrate several pest control actions into our pest control plans. We may use mechanical methods of control such as hoeing weeds or removal of aphids by water hose. We may plant shrubs that are resistant to fungus or use mulch to discourage weed growth, both examples of cultural means of pest control. With Integrated Pest Management, pest problems are routinely monitored, and these various controls are implemented as needed. Pesticides are applied only after pest levels exceed established thresholds. If chemical control is warranted, the safest product possible is chosen for the job.

California has enacted some of the strictest pesticide use laws in the country. In addition to complying with all Federal and State laws, this Division has chosen to further restrict and regulate its own pesticide use. All pesticides are classified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as either general-use or restricted-use. Both types of pesticides may be purchased and applied by anyone, including homeowners. Both types of pesticides, when used by the City in parklands are only used under the supervision of certified applicators—those persons having received special training each year and testing in the use, handling, storage, safety, and application of pesticides. The Parks Division rarely finds it necessary to employ the use of restricted products.

In addition, pesticides are categorized by their relative toxicity. The Parks Division always uses the least toxic material available to correct the pest problem. The Parks Division only uses the stronger products when all other means (cultural, mechanical, etc.) have not resolved the pest problem, and we are faced with unsafe conditions or the potential loss of useful facilities (sports fields, mature trees, etc.). We use no chemicals so toxic that notification of the public prior to application is required, and none of the chemicals used by the Parks Division require that the public be restricted from using the parklands following application procedures.

Most people store a number of chemicals at home, including household cleaners and paints; and, many people use pesticides that we typically call medicines. We use medicines to control athlete's foot (fungicide) or school age children's head lice (miticide) or fleas on pets (insecticides). Most of these products are at least as toxic to humans as most of the pesticides used by the Parks Division. However, most people feel safe in their presence because experience has shown them that if stored and used appropriately, they do not present a hazard to their health or well being. The same is true of the pesticides we use.

The safety of our own employees, the general public, and our environment remains our highest priority. That goal will not be compromised by our use of pesticides.

*For more information, call the Parks Division at (408) 730-7506.*