

Herbicide and Pesticide Use on Municipal Athletic Fields, Grassy Parks, and Natural Areas

(Interpretation of the Wetland Protection Act Regulations)

Approved by the Conservation Commission on March 12, 2020

1. In keeping with the Conservation Commission's "25-Foot Naturally Vegetated Buffer Policy", a 25-foot swath of native vegetation should be maintained (or established to the maximum extent possible) along every wetland edge.
2. Neonicotinoids shall not be used within Conservation Commission jurisdiction because of their adverse effects on pollinators.
3. Using other herbicides and pesticides in compliance with the City's IPM plan for maintenance of turf grass athletic fields, grassy parks, grassy play areas, or grassy picnic areas will not "remove, fill, dredge or alter" an adjacent wetland resource area, therefore using herbicides and pesticides in compliance with the City's IPM plan for maintenance (but not enlargement) of such facilities may be undertaken without a wetland permit (see 310 CMR 10.02 and 310 CMR 10.58(6)).

Exceptions: Several City properties were permitted with Orders of Conditions that had a perpetual condition prohibiting the use of herbicides and pesticides on land within Conservation Commission jurisdiction: Zervas School, Albemarle Fields, Mason Rice School, Newton Centre Playground, and Countryside School. Desired use of herbicides and pesticides on those parcels must get prior approval by the Conservation Office.

4. Any predominantly natural area (e.g., woods, wooded trails, wooded picnic areas, etc.) may not have herbicides or pesticides applied to it without a permit from the Conservation Commission.

This Policy as reflected in the City's IPM FAQ (3/24/20)

The Conservation Commission has regulatory authority over land within 100 feet of wetlands or within 200 feet of perennial streams.

Neonicotinoids shall not be used within Conservation Commission jurisdiction because of their adverse effects on pollinators.

Conservation Commission approval for the application of herbicides and pesticides must be sought if such application would take place outside of established grassy athletic field or grassy park areas.

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