

City of Stoughton		TITLE: Turf Management Policy
POLICY SOURCE: Department of Public Works	DATE APPROVED BY COMMON COUNCIL: July 23, 2013	REVISION DATE: July 24, 2018

I. Purpose

It is the purpose of this policy to define turf management procedures and processes for the cultivation of turf in City parks and other City of Stoughton properties maintained by the Department of Public Works (DPW).

II. Policy

It is the policy of the City of Stoughton DPW to responsibly manage the turf for all City properties based on their type of use, environmental factors and most importantly the health and safety of our users. City staff shall utilize Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques to manage the turf in all parks and properties maintained by the City.

III. Terms and Definitions

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a science-based decision-making process that identifies and reduces risks from pests and pest management related strategies. IPM coordinates the use of pest biology, environmental information, and available technology to prevent unacceptable levels of pest damage by the most economical means, while minimizing risk to people, property, resources, and the environment. IPM provides an effective strategy for managing pests in all arenas from developed agricultural, residential, and public lands to natural and wilderness areas. IPM provides an effective, all encompassing, low-risk approach to protect resources and people from pests. *(National IPM Roadmap – 2013)*

Weeds – a plant species that is determined to be undesirable for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: safety, human health hazards, ecological integrity, invasive species and aesthetic value.

Pesticides - chemicals used to control pests, including weeds (epa.gov). The term pesticides includes, but is not limited to, the following: herbicide, insecticide, animal repellent, fungicide, and sanitizer.

Herbicides - chemicals used to eradicate plants such as weeds and grasses.

Selective Herbicides - chemicals designed to eradicate specific plants, such as broad leaf weeds, while not harming the other plant species that share common turf areas.

Non-selective herbicides -chemicals designed to eradicate all “green” plant life.

Slow-release fertilizer – fertilizer formulated to release its nutrients over a 2-3 month period of time.

Fast-release fertilizer - formulated to release its nutrients quickly. This quick release of nutrients provides immediate nutrients to the turf.

Category “A” Areas- parks, recreation facilities and other City properties that will have a 15% or less tolerance for weeds. These areas include athletic fields where quality turf is critical to player safety or turf areas around facilities that receive high public use or visibility. These areas are maintained with a finish mower.

Category “B” Areas - parks, recreation facilities and other City properties that will have a 16-30% tolerance for weeds. Included in this category are areas where turf quality and appearance is important, but not critical. These areas are maintained with a wide area mower and/or finish mower.

Category “C” Areas – natural or native areas that will have a tolerance for weeds not greater than 50%. Included in this category are prairies, woodlands, wetlands and other native areas. Exceptions to the 50% tolerance may be used when performing a restoration project or if managing invasive species.

Hard Surface Areas - sidewalks/walkways, trails, parking lots, tennis courts, basketball courts, etc. in parks or on other property owned and maintained by the city.

Properly Trained Staff - employee(s) or contractor(s) who have obtained the proper application certification or license where applicable, and has been trained on the proper use of the products being used according to the manufacturer and the product Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

Pesticide Free Park(s) - In an effort to provide pesticide-free areas to the public, the city will make ongoing efforts to designate and maintain at least one or more parks free of pesticides. Even though the designated park is deemed pesticide free, city staff will still make every effort to keep the park within the designated weed tolerance within the category for which the park is placed by using alternative methods other than the use of pesticides.

IV. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Practices

It shall be the practice of the City of Stoughton to utilize IPM to manage turf property owned by the city. Under this policy, the most natural and environmentally sensitive actions will be taken to control weeds and other pests on an ongoing basis wherever economically feasible. When the percentage of the overall turf in a designated area has exceeded or is likely to exceed acceptable limits, pesticides may be introduced in the most sparing, economic and safest way possible. Any mitigative action taken to reduce weed pressure will be designed to target the specific troublesome pest and aim to limit the impact to human health and the environment.

Tenants of the IPM Program:

1. Pest identification
2. Monitoring and assessing pest numbers and damage
3. Establishing guidelines for when management action is needed
4. Preventing pest problems
5. Using a combination of biological, cultural, physical/mechanical and chemical management tools
6. After action is taken, staff will assess the effectiveness of pest management.

V. Practices and Procedures

1. Data Acquisition - City staff shall perform weed assessments before and after applying any turf treatments to determine the proper turf application and the efficacy of the prescribed treatment. The assessment should identify the location of the weed assessment, the types of weeds that were identified, the percentage of weeds that were identified within the assessment grid, and indicate the type of treatment needed.
2. Record Keeping - The City shall document all weed assessment results, pesticide application data, non-pesticide treatment data, any complaints received and make this information available to the public.
3. Turf Management Categories - City staff shall provide IPM turf management practices to each individual city green space based on the level of service required to meet the weed pressure threshold indicated in Appendix A. Alternative methods to turf treatment, other than the use of pesticides, will be given preference in all categories. For example, aeration and over seeding or mowing techniques would be used in lieu of pesticide treatment.

4. Pesticide Application - The controlled use of selective and non-selective pesticides shall be applied using the following practices and procedures:
- A. Whenever the use of pesticides is necessary, City staff shall make every effort to select a pesticide that provides the least amount of risk to human health, local ecosystems and the environment, while factoring in cost and effectiveness.
 - B. It shall be the responsibility of the Director of Public Works or their designee, in collaboration with the Recreation Director, to inform the public of all pesticide treatment dates utilizing the City of Stoughton web site, city run social media platforms and an email shall be sent to the recreation league user groups a minimum of 14 day prior to application. If a treatment is forced to be reschedule due to inclement weather, city staff will repost the new dates on the city website, social media and notify direct user groups of rescheduled treatment dates. City staff shall make every effort possible to accommodate user groups practice and game schedules.
 - C. The application of pesticides will only be considered when the quality of turf for an area does not meet the established standards and all other methods to improve the turf quality are ineffective or cost prohibitive.
 - D. Employee(s) or contractor(s) shall be properly trained and shall poses the proper application certification or licenses where applicable, and must be trained on the proper use of the products according to the manufacturer and the product Safety Data Sheet (SDS) before application onto turf within the City.
 - E. The applicator shall follow all application rates and wear all personal protective equipment required by the product label and Safety Data Sheet.
 - F. Spray patterns for non-selective herbicides will not exceed 6" around any object or on either side of a fence line except for softball/baseball field warning tracks.
 - G. Herbicide applications for broadleaf control will be applied in early spring and/or early fall with a systemic herbicide which shall be absorbed into the plant within 24 hours.
 - H. No athletic field use will be permitted or scheduled for a minimum of 48 hours, unless otherwise stated by the product manufacturer, post turf treatment with any pesticide.
 - I. Pesticides will not be used on hard surfaces in close proximity to storm sewers systems.
 - J. Spot application as opposed to broadcast application will be used whenever feasible based on weed assessment data.
 - K. Caution shall be used when applying pesticides along waterways, playgrounds, sports courts, etc and applied according to the product label or manufacturers recommended setback or buffer zone requirements.

5. Fertilizer Application - The controlled use of selected fertilizers shall be applied using the following practices and procedures.
 - A. Fertilizers will be used when establishing or re-establishing new turf areas (sodding may be suggested more frequently).
 - B. Fertilizers shall not be applied within the required setback or buffer zone of any waterway or water conveyance system as indicated on the product label.
 - C. The amount of fertilizer applied to parks, athletic fields or other City properties will be determined by soil testing results, standards identified in Wisconsin DNR Technical Standard #1100 and the product label.
 - D. Fertilizers will be swept off or removed from paved areas.
 - E. Fertilizers will be applied in the spring and/or fall depending on turf conditions unless additional fertilizer treatments are required when rehabbing an existing turf area or initiating a grow-in program for new turf.

6. Other - General Turf Management Practices and Procedures:
 - A. Preference will be given to non-chemical means of controlling turf growth around all city trees, posts, fences, or structures by utilizing mulch or other landscape bedding material.
 - B. All mowing equipment shall be calibrated to not cut the grass below 3". The Parks Maintenance Supervisor may exceed this threshold on athletic fields as determined by the type of use.
 - C. It shall be the goal of the city to aerate twice yearly as time permits with preference given to athletic fields due to player safety
 - D. Over seeding green spaces as needed in the spring or early fall.
 - E. Collaboration with other local turf managers, utilizing IPM practices, should be sought to provide a more cohesive community wide approach to turf management and to look at ways to share resources.
 - F. The Contractor will post the area every 75'. In addition to the 4"x5" Contractor required notification signs, The City of Stoughton Public Works Department will also post 9"x12" application warning signs in strategic locations throughout the park that are visible to potential users. Signs shall be placed behind the sidewalk so they are visible to pedestrians. (See attachment for example)
 - G. All contracted applicators shall be provided a copy of this policy and a pre spray meeting shall be scheduled to review the policies and procedures of this document.

7. All hard surface areas will have a Category A classification if the following conditions exist:
 - A. Undesirable weeds that grow in cracks can create an unsafe surface for users.
 - B. Untreated weeds in hard surface cracks can lead to surface damage and follow-up repair.
 - C. Public exposure to spot herbicide treatment is typically very minimal, usually limited to footwear.

Appendix A

City of Stoughton Public Works Department

Classifications of Parks and Other City Properties

Category A (15% or Less Weed Pressure)

- Athletic Fields In City Parks
- Business Park Entrance
- City Hall/Fire Department/Public Safety
- Rotary Park
- Senior Center

Category B (16-30% Weed Pressure)

- Amundson Park (Disc Golf Course)
- Bjoin Park
- Chamber of Commerce
- Circle Hair Lot
- Criddle Park
- Dunkirk Park
- Division St Park
- East Park
- Fourth St Dam
- Fourth/Main St Parking Lot
- Library Parking lot
- Lowell Park
- Mandt Park
- Nordic Ridge Park
- Norse Park
- North Parking Lot
- Nottingham Lot
- Page St/Williams Drive Lot
- Public Works Facility
- Racetrack Park
- Riverside Cemetery
- Riverside Park
- Schefelker Park
- Sixth St Parking Lot
- South Parking Lot

- Troll Beach
- Veterans Park (Pesticide Free)
- Virgin Lake Park
- Virgin Lake Trail
- West St Lot
- Westview Ridge Park
- Wheeler Prairie Cemetery
- Yahara River Trail
- Youth Center

Category C (Weed Pressure Not Greater Than 50%)

- Academy St Rail Bank
- Amundson Park Prairie
- Dunkirk Ave Rail Bank
- Fourth/Chicago St Lot
- Greenways and Storm Water Passages
- Lowell Park Community Garden
- Ridge St
- Schefelker Prairie
- Viaduct Park Row

PESTICIDE APPLICATION



**KEEP
OFF**