



## Statement on Herbicide Applications at Schools

The health and well-being of our children and school employees is of critical importance to us and we appreciate the concern a few have had about the use of chemical products on our lawns and common areas. As you will note below, we have thought through this issue very deliberately.

Our view is, as with prescription and non-prescription medications and a host of commonly-used household chemical products we all use, the safety concern lies not in the actual use of the product but in the misapplication or misuse by those not following the product label. There is no shortage of products we all have in our homes that if used incorrectly, can be of danger.

So when it comes to keeping our turf healthy, green, weed and pest free, it is why we trust our service to TruGreen, the largest professional lawn care company in the United States. As the industry leader, their educated and trained professionals are vigilant regarding the products they use and how and where they are applied. We have worked with them on a very targeted approach to herbicide use on the grass and remain very comfortable with our decision and their professionalism in this area.

Specifically, our decision is based on:

1. **Employ Trained Professionals.** Our overall commitment to health and safety is reflected by our decision to use a professional turf care company to apply needed products. We use the largest professional turf care company in America that employs a trained team of professionals who only use products that have been vigorously tested and registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and approved for use by our state agencies.
2. **Follow Best Practices.** The best practices related to herbicide application reflect an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to turf care. As US EPA notes on its "Integrated Pest Management" website, IPM calls for the use of herbicides just in the areas where they are needed and not on a wide-area basis. Similarly, it notes that fertilizers should be applied several times during the year, rather than just using one heavy application a year. As a result, the turf care company we employ does not "blanket" the turf with herbicides for broadleaf weeds; rather, they focus them just on the problem areas. For more information, visit <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm/>.
3. **Use the Right Products to Minimize Risk.** The products that are applied to our property do not contain any of the active ingredients that either the International Agency for Research on Cancer or the US EPA have classified as known or probable carcinogens, nor are likely to be carcinogenic. The products are mixed and applied in a highly diluted solution as instructed by the manufacturer's label. A typical fertilizer or weed control mixture will consist of 92% water.

4. **Products Applied are Well Known.** Products used are no different than any product anyone can purchase at Lowe's, Home Depot or at a local lawn and garden center – *the only difference is in our case they are applied by educated, trained and experienced professionals that are properly licensed / certified by the state.* Additionally, those professionals have no financial incentive to use more product than they need to be effective given the cost of most chemical products.

5. **Use Approved and Thoroughly-Tested Products.** We remain 100% committed to only using products that satisfy the U.S. EPA's rigorous qualifications in order to provide maximum peace of mind. To address potential environmental and health risks, the US EPA oversees a rigorous process to assure that the public and the environment are protected from unreasonable risk. Federal law requires herbicides to undergo lengthy and detailed scientific testing before they can be registered and approved for sale and application. To make such determinations, EPA requires more than 100 different scientific studies and tests from applicants.

For more information on these and other EPA standards, visit <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/riskassess.htm> and <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/>.

6. **Ample Product Data Available.** There is a tremendous amount of data available on the nature and use of all types of chemicals. The types of products we apply are those which have been thoroughly evaluated by federal and state government agencies and pass their test, those which come from reputable manufacturers, and perhaps most importantly, products which have undergone thorough, peer-reviewed scientific evaluation. There are a variety of sources which can be tapped for additional background and information:

- a. US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). Information on herbicides, herbicide use and a variety of related topics can be found at: [www.epa.gov/pesticides](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides)
- b. The Environmental Health Foundation (EHRF).
  - Background. The EHRF is a nonprofit, scientific research foundation focused on furthering the understanding of science related to health and the environment, and especially the interaction between the environment and human health. EHRF works through its national network of scientists who are experts in relevant academic fields to foster an approach to addressing health and environmental issues of broad public importance in a manner based on the most up-to-date scientific information. [www.ehrf.info](http://www.ehrf.info)
- ii. Turf Care-Related Research.
  - EHRF Executive Director Dr. John Heinze has written on the benefits of green space (<http://www.ehrf.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/BenefitsofGreenspace.pdf>).

- EHRF Affiliated Toxicologist, Dr. Katherine von Stackelberg (*also of NEK Associates, Ltd. and the Harvard School of Public Health*) has written on the Ecosystem Services from Green Space ([http://www.ehrf.info/?page\\_id=63](http://www.ehrf.info/?page_id=63)) and the Safety of Products Used to Maintain Green Space ([http://www.ehrf.info/?page\\_id=76](http://www.ehrf.info/?page_id=76)).

c. Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE).

- Background: RISE is an industry organization which represents companies involved in various parts of the turf care industry. [www.pestfacts.org/](http://www.pestfacts.org/).
- ii. Turf Care-Related Research.
  - [http://www.debutrhythms.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=23&Itemid=3.](http://www.debutrhythms.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=23&Itemid=3)

In closing, we are certainly aware there are some organizations and individuals who have concerns about any chemical usage, from indoor cleaning fluids to food additives to outdoor turf products. It is for that reason we believe only educated, trained professionals certified by the state using US EPA registered products should be trusted with our service.

- EHRF Affiliated Toxicologist, Dr. Katherine von Stackelberg (*also of NEK Associates, Ltd. and the Harvard School of Public Health*) has written on the Ecosystem Services from Green Space ([http://www.ehrf.info/?page\\_id=63](http://www.ehrf.info/?page_id=63)) and the Safety of Products Used to Maintain Green Space ([http://www.ehrf.info/?page\\_id=76](http://www.ehrf.info/?page_id=76)).