



Quick Reference Guide for Lawn Care Pros

Here's a quick refresher straight from the *Maryland Professional Lawn Care Manual* on what licensed firms and certified professionals need to know and do to stay in compliance with Maryland's Lawn Fertilizer Law. To download a copy of the complete manual go to mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer.

Soil Testing

Soil tests must be taken for each new customer and once every three years thereafter if phosphorus will be applied to the property. An approved lab must be used to test the samples. Follow University of Maryland recommendations included in these fact sheets: **TT-115** (turf maintenance), **TT-116** (seeding) and **TT-118** (golf courses). Download the fact sheets at mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer.

Record Keeping

Keep the following records of fertilizer applications:

- Name of the fertilizer applicator
- Size of the area fertilized
- Date of nutrient application
- Address and location of client
- Rate of application (*Example: 4 pounds of fertilizer per 1,000 square feet*)
- Total amount of fertilizer used per application
- Analysis of the fertilizer product used
- An original or legible copy of the fertilizer label

Nitrogen Limits

A single application may not exceed 0.9 pound total nitrogen per 1,000 square feet and 0.7 pound of soluble nitrogen per 1,000 square feet, except when using enhanced efficiency fertilizer. Annual limits may not exceed University of Maryland recommendations outlined in the chart.

Enhanced Efficiency Fertilizer

- Enhanced efficiency, controlled-release products may be applied at no more than 2.5 pounds of nitrogen per year.
- No more than 80 percent of the annual recommended rate for nitrogen may be applied.

Annual Nitrogen Recommendation Rates for Commercially Maintained Turfgrass Total Nitrogen Annually (pounds of N per 1,000 square feet)

Cool Season Grasses	Years 1 through 2	Subsequent Years
Kentucky bluegrass	3.0 - 4.0	2.0 - 3.5
Turf-type tall fescue	2.5 - 3.5	2.0 - 3.0
Fine fescue	1.0 - 2.0	0.0 - 1.5
Perennial ryegrass	2.5 - 3.5	2.0 - 3.0
Warm Season Grasses	Years 1 through 2	Subsequent Years
Bermudagrass	2.0 - 4.0	2.0 - 3.0
Zoysiagrass	1.0 - 2.0	0.0 - 2.0

- The maximum monthly release rate may not exceed 0.7 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.
- These products may not be applied after November 15.
- Professionals must maintain records of the release rate documented by the manufacturer.

Phosphorus Limits for Organic or Natural Organic Turf Fertilizer

- P₂O₅ may be applied based on soil test results and the University of Maryland Fertility Index Value Soil Test Category. (See Appendix D, *Maryland Professional Lawn Care Manual*, mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer)
- Organic or natural organic turf fertilizer may not be applied when soils test at "optimum" to "excessive" for phosphorus levels.
- If P₂O₅ is recommended for seeding or sod installation (Fact sheet TT-116) and the soil test phosphorus level is in the "optimum" range, only synthetic fertilizer may be used.

Synthetic Turf Fertilizer

- Except for starter fertilizer, fertilizer labeled for use on turf may not contain phosphorus.
- Apply P₂O₅ based on soil test results and the University of Maryland Fertility Index Value Soil Test Category. (See Appendix D, *Maryland Professional Lawn Care Manual*)

Fertilizer Setbacks

- Nitrogen or phosphorus may not be applied to turf within 15 feet of streams, creeks, ponds, or other waterways.
- If using a drop spreader, rotary spreader with deflector shield, or targeted spray, the setback may be reduced to 10 feet.
- Do not apply fertilizer to driveways, sidewalks, or other impervious surfaces.

Products that land on these surfaces must be swept back onto lawns or cleaned up.

Fertilizer Timing Restrictions

- Nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer may not be applied to turf between December 1 and March 1.
- From November 16 through December 1, lawn care professionals (not homeowners) may apply nitrogen to lawns at a maximum rate of 0.5 pound per 1,000 square feet, if agronomically appropriate.
- The law prohibits anyone from applying lawn fertilizer containing nitrogen and phosphorus to impervious surfaces or frozen ground.
- Lime, potassium, and other nutrients are not regulated under the law.

Newly Established Lawns

Turf fertilizer used for routine maintenance applications may not contain phosphorus unless a current soil test (less than three years old) indicates the need. When establishing turf after a tillage operation or more drastic disturbance, such as construction, phosphorus may be applied without a soil test following University of Maryland recommendations for seeding. (See Fact sheet TT-116 at mda.maryland.gov/fertilizer)

Penalties

Violators are subject to civil penalties of up to \$1,000 for the first violation and \$2,000 for each subsequent violation.

