

LAWN FERTILIZER AND WEEDS

Weeds in our lake are becoming a serious problem. Weeds are growing where they haven't been a problem in the past. It's only going to get worse, but you can help as weeds also need phosphorus to accelerate their growth. Zebra mussels have contributed to weed growth too by making our water clearer allowing the sunlight to go further down. Please do your part in using phosphorus free fertilizer on your lawn. A summary of the Minnesota law is listed below.

[Minnesota Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Law - A Summary](#)

Minnesota's Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Law, was enacted to reduce over-enrichment of rivers, lakes, and wetlands with the nutrient phosphorus. Excessive phosphorus in surface water leads to an overabundance of algae and other aquatic plants.

The law was enacted over a period of years starting in 2002. Restriction on phosphorus fertilizer use on lawns and turf started in 2004 in the seven county Twin Cities metro area and in Minnesota's other 80 counties in 2005. As of January 2007, Minnesota is the only state in the nation which regulates phosphorus fertilizer use on lawns and turf.



Look for the middle number: The three numbers on a fertilizer container lists its percent nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium content, in that order. A zero in the middle means a phosphorus-free fertilizer.

Full text of the law is found in Minnesota's *Fertilizer, Soil Amendment, and Plant Amendment Law*, [Chapter 18C](#) of the Minnesota State Statutes. References to specific sections of the law are given below.

Use of Phosphorus Fertilizer on Lawns and Turf is Restricted (Minnesota Statutes [18C.60](#))

Fertilizers containing phosphorus cannot be used on lawns and turf in Minnesota unless one of the following situations exists:

- A soil test or plant tissue test shows a need for phosphorus.
- A new lawn is being established by seeding or laying sod.

- Phosphorus fertilizer is being applied on a golf course by trained staff.
- Phosphorus fertilizer is being applied on farms growing sod for sale.

When these situations do not exist, state law requires phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer is to be used. The nutrient value of a fertilizer is indicated by a series of three numbers printed on its container. The numbers represent percent nutrient content of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium, in that order. A fertilizer marked with 22-0-15, for example, is phosphorus-free as the middle number is zero. [Zero is defined to be less than 0.67% phosphate.](#)

When used, phosphorus lawn fertilizer needs to be applied at rates recommended by the University of Minnesota and approved by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. These rates are based on soil test results and can be found in the University of Minnesota Extension publication [Fertilizing Lawns](#) (FO-03338).

[Options for using or disposing surplus phosphorus lawn fertilizer.](#)

Fertilizer on Paved Surfaces Needs to be Cleaned Up (Minnesota Statutes [18C.61](#))

Fertilizer spilled or spread on paved surfaces such as sidewalks, driveways, and streets needs to be cleaned up immediately to prevent it from washing away into rivers, lakes and wetlands.

This applies to all fertilizers, whether or not they contain phosphorus or not.

Enforcement (Minnesota Statutes [18C.62](#))

Restrictions and prohibitions in this law are enforced by [local units of government](#) under their existing authority. Violations are treated as petty misdemeanors