

Fertilizer Requirements for Lawncare Firms

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection
Fertilizer Program – DATCPfert@wisconsin.gov

Most lawncare and landscape businesses are complying with Wisconsin's pesticide certification and business license requirements. However, businesses currently holding a pesticide business location license may not be aware of Wisconsin's **fertilizer** regulations and how those regulations may affect their businesses.

Do I need a fertilizer license for my business?

Anyone who "manufactures and distributes" fertilizer in Wisconsin, including lawncare firms, must have a fertilizer license. In general, the action of mixing fertilizer ingredients together, and/or mixing fertilizers/fertilizer ingredients with water or other materials, is considered manufacturing, and therefore requires a fertilizer license. While there are instances where that previous actions may not require a fertilizer license (e.g., mixing ingredients/concentrates according to label directions), the questions below may assist you in determining if a fertilizer license is required.

Here are four questions to help determine if you need a fertilizer license:

1. Are you mixing urea and/or potash with water? Yes ____ No ____
2. Are you mixing a dry granular fertilizer with water? Yes ____ No ____
3. Do you dilute liquid fertilizer to create a lower grade from label? Yes ____ No ____
4. Do you have your own line or brand name of fertilizers? Yes ____ No ____

If you answered yes to any of the questions, you need a fertilizer license. Exemptions to the license requirement can be found in the [Fertilizer Law, Wisconsin, Stat. § 94.64](#).

Permit Requirements for Low-Analysis Fertilizers

In most situations, lawncare and landscape businesses mix and blend their unique liquid formulas specially designed for spring, summer and fall applications. These liquid blends are formulated to contain low amounts of plant nutrients (mainly nitrogen) to avoid burning turfgrass and landscaping plants. A typical low-analysis liquid formula is manufactured by mixing 50 pounds of urea (46-0-0) into 200 gallons (approx..1,780 lbs.) of water. The N-P-K grade for this low-analysis fertilizer is 1.29-0-0.

These liquid blends are considered to be "low-analysis" fertilizers, and are subject to the permit requirements found in our fertilizer law.

[Wis. Stat. § 94.64\(3m\)\(a\)](#), states:

No person may distribute mixed fertilizer in which the sum of the guarantees for nitrogen, available phosphate and soluble potash totals less than 24% unless:

1. The mixed fertilizer is exempted from this requirement by department rule; or
2. The mixed fertilizer is a nonagricultural or special-use fertilizer and the person obtains a permit from the department authorizing its distribution as a nonagricultural or special-use fertilizer.

Most lawncare businesses generally need nonagricultural fertilizer permits for each of their spring, summer and fall formulas.

Required Customer Information

Certain information must be supplied with any fertilizer sold or distributed in Wisconsin. Lawncare and landscaping firms must also comply with labeling requirements when servicing homeowners. In most cases, a written invoice or statement with the following information can be provided at the time of application:

1. Lawncare firm's name and address;
2. Customer's name and address;
3. Date of sale (application date);
4. Fertilizer brand name or product name;
5. Fertilizer grade;
6. Guaranteed analysis; and
7. Net weight (or total gallons and weight per gallon).

The guaranteed analysis must include the percentage of ammoniacal, nitrate, water insoluble and other forms of nitrogen which make up the total nitrogen guarantee, and include a nutrient source statement.

Following is an example of acceptable labeling for a lawncare firm that applies dry granular products.

Mike's Lawn Care Service 2101 Industrial Park Drive Anytown, WI 53713 Phone: 608/555-1212	Brand Name & Grade: Mike's Lawn Food 14-0-4
Customer Name: John Smith	Guaranteed Analysis Total Nitrogen (N) 14% 14% Urea Nitrogen Soluble Potash (K ₂ O)5%
Customer Address: 123 Birch St., Madison, WI 53705	Derived from: Urea and Muriate of Potash
Date of Service: May 28, 2018	Total Amount Applied: 30 Lbs. At 3 lbs./1,000 sq. ft.
<i>Thank you for letting us service your lawn.</i>	Service Amt.\$XX.00 Tax\$. Total\$XX.XX

Following is an example of acceptable labeling for a lawncare firm that applies liquid bulk formulations.

Mike's Lawn Care Service 2101 Industrial Park Drive Anytown, WI 53713 Phone: 608/555-1212	Brand Name & Grade: Mike's Spring Lawn Treatment 4.4-0-1.4
Customer Name: John Smith	Guaranteed Analysis Total Nitrogen (N) 4.4% 4.4% Urea Nitrogen Soluble Potash (K ₂ O) 1.4%
Customer Address: 123 Birch St., Madison, WI 53705	Derived from: Urea and Potash
Date of Service: May 8, 2018	Net Weight: 12 gals (8.5lbs/gal) at .75 lb. N/1,000 sq. ft.
<i>Thank you for letting us service your lawn.</i>	Service Amt.\$XX.00 Tax\$. Total\$XX.XX