



Clean Ocean Action's New Jersey's Fertilizer Law

New Jersey passed the nation's toughest fertilizer law, which reduces the amount of pollution entering waterways. NJ is the first state to limit both the nitrogen and phosphorous content of all lawn-care fertilizer products sold at retailers and to regulate the use of these fertilizers by consumers and professionals.

What You Need to Know

Content of Fertilizer Bag:

- Consumer lawn fertilizer sold or used in NJ must have at least 20% of its nitrogen in "slow-release" form. Consumers are urged to purchase fertilizers with the highest content of "slow-release" nitrogen.
- Total amount of nitrogen in each bag is reduced.
- Phosphorus is banned from lawn fertilizer with some exceptions.
- Certain exemptions apply, for more details see www.cleanoceanaction.org.

Best Management Practices:

- Fertilizer application is prohibited from November 15th - March 1st or any other time the ground is frozen. (Certified/Professional fertilizer applicators can apply until December 1st if the ground is not frozen.)
- For 1,000 sq ft, 0.7 lbs of water-soluble-nitrogen and 0.9 lbs of total nitrogen is allowed per application. The total amount applied within a year is limited to 3.2 lbs of nitrogen.
- It is prohibited to apply fertilizer within 25 feet of waterways, before heavy rains, or on impervious surfaces.
- **All lawn care providers applying fertilizer must be certified;** for a list see: www.profact.rutgers.edu and click on "Certified Applicators."
- **The law exempts commercial farms and golf courses,** but grounds keepers must be trained or certified to apply fertilizer to a golf course.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is the law the same for homeowners and professionals? No. Professionals must be trained or certified, and there are some differences in application rates and times.

What is slow-release nitrogen? Slow-release nitrogen is an organic or coated form that becomes available to plants over time. Fast release nitrogen, or water soluble nitrogen, is immediately available to plants. Excess nitrogen can burn plants. It can also end-up in runoff or groundwater during rain or irrigation.

Does my lawn need fertilizer? No. Check out Clean Ocean Action's *10 Tips for Lawn and Garden* for actions homeowners can take to keep their yards healthy and fertilizer free. Homeowners should keep soil uncompacted and leave grass clippings.

Who enforces the law? The Department of Agriculture oversees the content of fertilizer for compliance. County and local entities may fine professionals according to the law. Towns need to adopt a municipal ordinance to enforce the law and fine non-professionals who are not compliant with the Fertilizer Law.

What do you do if you see someone violating the law? If possible, ask if they've heard of the fertilizer law and explain it to them. If that's not possible, contact your county health department or town official.

For more information and the complete 10 Tip Series visit us at:

www.CleanOceanAction.org

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