

New Orange County Fertilizer Ordinance

On October 6, 2009, the Board of County Commissioners passed a new lawn/turf fertilizer ordinance in an effort to help protect Orange County surface waters. The new fertilizer rule goes into effect March 1, 2010. The rule is in effect throughout Orange County.

Orange County Environmental Protection Division (EPD) demonstrated to the Board of County Commissioners that in order to adequately address urban fertilizer contributions to nutrient loading to the area's many lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands, it is necessary to institute more stringent standards than those established by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Model Ordinance for Florida-Friendly Fertilizer Use on Urban Landscapes (January 2009).

Ordinance Basics:

- Only use lawn fertilizers that contain zero phosphorus and no less than 50% slow-release nitrogen
- Apply no more than one pound (1 lb.) of nitrogen per 1000 square ft. at any one application
- Do not fertilize lawns when severe storm warnings are in place or within a three-day cone of uncertainty for tropical storms or hurricanes. No fertilizing during Florida's rainy season of June 1st to September 30th (trained applicators are exempted)
- A ten (10) foot buffer zone must be maintained next to all lakes, ponds, streams, canals, wetlands, and stormwater ponds
- Broadcast spreaders must be equipped with a shield positioned to deflect fertilizer from impervious pavement, rights-of-way, stormwater drains, ditches, and conveyances
- Sweep up fertilizer that falls on driveways, streets, and sidewalks
- Do not blow fertilizer, lawn clippings, and leaves into streets or down storm drains

Commercial applicators and individuals applying fertilizer are required to follow the practices outlined in the new ordinance. EPD will conduct an education campaign to inform residents, business, and lawn care professionals about the new lawn fertilization ordinance, good stewardship practices to keep other nutrients from entering surface waters and wetlands, and Florida-Friendly Landscaping™. Training to be able to properly fertilize during the black-out period can be obtained through Orange County Extension as well as programs accessed through the Orange County EPD website. Homeowners, businesses, and HOAs who wish to learn more about installing, designing and caring for their landscapes are encouraged to seek landscape education from [Orange County's Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program](#) (FYNP). For a list of free FYNP and Florida Friendly Landscaping™ classes refer to EPD upcoming events at www.ocfl.net/epd or contact the Orange County Cooperative Extension at 407- 254 – 9200.