

How to Talk with Landowners



It's all about respect.



- You are entering someone's property. Show proper identification.
- Someone's land/home is normally their biggest asset. It's natural for someone to want to protect their investment.

Demonstrate confidence and knowledge.

- Ask veterans in your crew lots of questions and continuously learn so that you are able to answer and respond knowledgeably to landowners' questions and concerns.
- The more you learn and know, the more confident you will be speaking with landowners.
- Never bluff. If you don't know an answer, say:

That's a good question and I honestly don't know the answer.

I want to make sure you get the right information so I'm going to make a couple calls and we'll follow up with you on that.



Be professional.



- Wear your company shirt, badge, hat, etc.
- Keep your cell phone setting on silent and keep your phone out of sight.
- Avoid slang and curse words.
- Avoid telling personal stories. You're there to listen to the landowner.
- If you are working on or have completed training and/or licensure, tell the landowners about it. It will help you gain their trust.

Try saying:

I understand the hazards of herbicides.

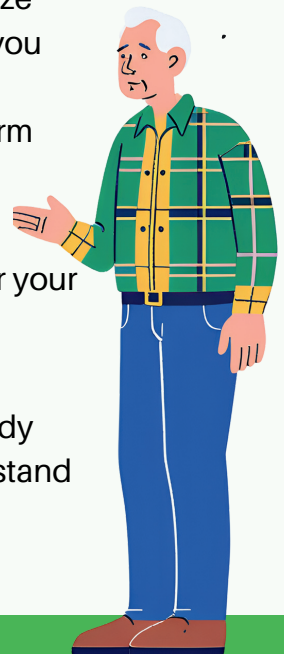
I'm responsible to the state for every herbicide I apply.

I am licensed and trained.

Practice active listening.



- Restate or summarize what you thought you heard from the landowner to confirm you understood correctly.
- Give the landowner your full attention and interest.
- Try to read their body language to understand if they are upset or becoming upset.





Communication is key



Body language



- ✔ Greet the landowner with a smile.
- ✔ Make eye contact, especially during the first 2 minutes.
- ✔ Stand up straight.
- ✔ Give the landowner 4-6 feet of space. Stand back from the door after knocking.
- ✔ Keep your arms at your sides, don't make any big gestures.

Use positive language and show that you are willing to work together.

I'm going to let you know what I think would be the best solution here, and then I'll give you a chance to ask any questions that you may have.

I appreciate you taking the time to talk with me today.

I'm hoping we can come to an agreement today.

We won't need to return frequently if we kill the roots of the problem species now.

If you allow us, next spring, the brush will be dead, grass will grow, and we won't have any more issues.

I'll try to answer any questions you have, and if I can't answer one, I'll have my supervisor get back to you.



Verbal communication



- ✔ Say what you need to say in as few words as possible.
- ✔ Use a soft tone of voice and a low volume to present yourself as non-threatening.
- ✔ Speak in easy-to-understand language. Remember that not everyone is knowledgeable about IVM.
- ✔ Use the right words. Start broad and if you receive questions, you can give more detailed answers.

Product

Treatment

Application

Treat brush

✗ Avoid using these words:

✗ Chemical

✗ Poison

✗ Kill brush

✗ Spray

Display empathy

✔ Listen to their concerns or bad experiences with your full attention.

✔ Say:

I get it.

I understand.

That's a valid concern.

I can see how you might feel that way.

That's a common question people have. Here's what we know.





If the landowner is unhappy



Respond sincerely.



If you don't know what to say to a landowner who has shared a complaint/concern, look them in the eye and say:

I get it.

That sounds hard.

I'm sorry you had to go through that.

It's not my intention to cause you any problems.

Thanks for letting me know about your concern/s.

If things escalate and you're not able to have a calm, respectful conversation:

- Attempt to defuse the situation instead of escalating it further.
- Allow them to say whatever they need to say without interrupting.
- If it's possible, provide the landowner with options.
- Speak in a soft voice and say:

I'm sorry you had to deal with that previously.

With this treatment, we wouldn't have to return as frequently.

I understand. It's normal to have some questions.

It's not my intention to cause you any problems.



If the situation continues to escalate, or you no longer feel safe on their property:

- If:
 - you feel like you may lose your temper
 - you are being treated badly
 - you are not safe

It's always better to leave the situation

- Thank them for their time and politely excuse yourself from the situation.
- Not sure what to say? Try one of these:

Here is some more information about vegetation management. If you have any questions or you change your mind, please give me/this number a call.

Okay, I'll be making some notes about your concerns/complaints. Thank you for your time.

I see we're not coming to an agreement, but thanks for talking with me today.

Well, it seems like we may not be able to solve this problem today, but thank you for your time.

