

General Pesticide Safety



Pesticides are chemically designed agents used to control, repel or destroy pests. Pesticides are categorized as herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides. All pesticides are toxic to some degree because they are designed to poison the target pest, but pesticides are generally safe when they are handled and applied correctly. Properly using pesticides can help prevent accidental exposure, contamination and non-target damage. Exercising common sense safety and following label directions aid the safe use of pesticides.

General Guidelines

- Keep all children and pets away from pesticides, application equipment and treated areas. Inform your neighbors when an application will be made and what pesticides will be used.
- Wash thoroughly with soap and water after handling or using pesticides. Wash clothing worn for pesticide applications after each application and separately from other laundry.

Preparation

- Choose the product with the appropriate active ingredient, formulation, target pests and sites where it can be used.
- Read the label on the pesticide container before handling or applying any pesticide. The label can determine the active ingredient and its toxicity to the surrounding environment, such as nearby water, plants, and animals.
- Before using a pesticide, know what to do in the case of an accidental poisoning. Instructions can be found on the product label.
- Calibrate pesticide application equipment to ensure accurate applications. Over application may cause runoff or seepage, contaminate water supplies or leave harmful residues on the application area.
- Measure carefully and mix only the amount needed for the current job to eliminate the problem of storage or disposal of unused pesticides.
- Mix pesticides in a well-ventilated area, preferably outdoors. Handle and apply pesticides away from wells, ponds, streams, sewer drains, etc. to avoid contamination of water.

Use

- When handling or applying pesticides always wear rubber gloves and other protective clothing or safety equipment specified on the 'Worker Protection' portion of the pesticide label.



- Don't eat or smoke while handling or applying pesticides to avoid ingestion of pesticide residue.
- Avoid getting pesticides on you. If a pesticide does come in direct contact with skin, wash the area immediately with soap and water.
- Avoid breathing fumes, dust and vapor from pesticides.
- Avoid applying pesticides to non-targeted objects, food, plants, animals or any objects used for eating or drinking.
- Avoid drift and contamination of non-target objects by applying pesticides only when winds are light. Never apply pesticides if the wind is stronger than that allowed on the label. Drift may harm or destroy surrounding plants, insects, animals or humans.
- Clean up spills immediately. For small spills, use an absorbent material such as cat litter or sawdust to soak up liquid spills, sweep it into a garbage bag and dispose of it with the regular trash. For larger spills, immediately create a barrier to prevent spreading of the liquid.

Reentry

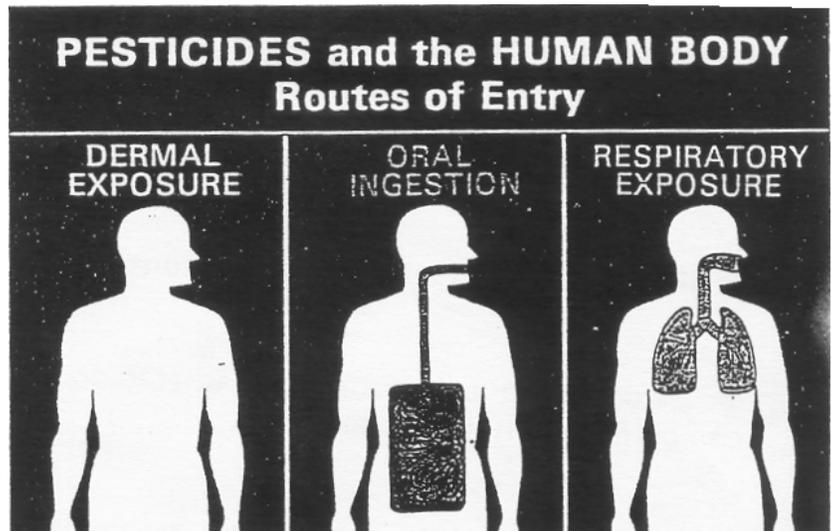
- Allow the application area to dry completely before human or pet contact is made.

Storage

- If it is necessary to store pesticides, always store them in their original, labeled container. Make sure all containers are tightly closed. Store pesticides out of children's reach and in a locked area if possible.

Disposal

- Safely dispose of empty pesticide containers by following directions on the container label. The department offers a Pesticide Container Recycling Program. The program accepts plastic and steel containers that are properly rinsed. Contact the department for more information.



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