

# Handling Pesticides Safely

Washington State University Urban IPM and Pesticide Safety Education Program

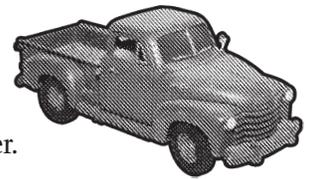
If you choose to use pesticides in your IPM approach, you should know the following:

- ▶ Pesticides are chemicals used in and around the home to control pests such as insects, weeds, fungi, rodents and germs.
- ▶ Bleach, liquid soap, furniture polish and antifreeze are examples of household chemicals which have hazards similar to pesticides; some are quite dangerous, while others are much less harmful.
- ▶ **SIGNAL WORDS** and **PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS** on labels of all household chemicals indicate product hazards and how to handle them safely.
- ▶ This document contains checklists for the safe handling of pesticides and other household chemicals.



## Transporting Pesticides

- Bag pesticides separate from groceries.
- Protect bottles by wrapping them in paper to reduce the chance of breakage if they fall over or crash together.
- Secure containers upright to make sure containers cannot fall or be knocked over.
- Transport in trunk of car, away from people and groceries.



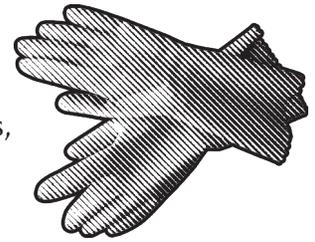
## Storing Pesticides

- Store product in such a manner as to eliminate access to children and pets. Pets can knock products off shelves. Children and pets can ingest them.
- Store pesticides four feet off the ground, preferably in a locked and labeled cabinet.
- Do not** put pesticides in soft-drink bottles or other containers. Store them in their original containers with labels that list ingredients, directions for use and treatment in case of accidental poisoning.
- Apply transparent tape over the label to keep it legible.
- Never store pesticides with food or medical supplies.**
- Keep your pesticide storage area dry and well-ventilated.
- Check pesticide containers periodically for leaks, corrosion, breaks, tears or rust. If container is broken, take it to your local household hazardous waste collection facility.

## Apply Pesticides Safely

- Read the label, it's the law.
- Make sure the pest you are targeting for control is really causing the problem. Double check the pesticide label to verify the product will control that pest.

- Choose the right pesticide and always follow label directions when applying pesticides (see the Learning About Labels fact sheet for more information on pesticide labeling.) The label lists the areas or locations where you can legally apply the pesticide, what protective clothing must be worn, how to mix the pesticide and other important information.
- Wear the protective clothing the label requires to minimize exposure during mixing, application and clean up. Examples of protective clothing and equipment are a long sleeved shirt, long pants, shoes, rubber gloves and goggles.
- Mix only the amount you need to do the job. Mix outdoors or in a well-ventilated area.
- Keep children and pets out of the area where pesticides are being mixed and out of application area until spray is dry or dust has settled.
- Calibrate your sprayer so you are certain that you apply the correct amount.
- Never spray or apply dusts outdoors on a windy day.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke when using pesticides. You could easily transfer traces of the pesticide from hand to mouth.



- Use pesticide indoors only if the label specifically states it can be used inside the home. Remove food, dishes, pots and pans from the room before treating kitchen cabinets. Pay close attention to reentry and ventilation instructions.
- Wash hands well with soap and water after handling pesticides;** residues on hands easily transfer to food, children, cigarettes, etc.
- Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when dealing with pesticides, they may trap material.

### **Wear the Right Clothing**

- At a minimum, wear long pants, long-sleeved shirt and rubber gloves to reduce your exposure. Read the label under “Hazards to Humans and Domestic Animals” and wear the listed protective clothing and equipment.
- Do not wash clothing used during pesticide application with family laundry. Wash clothing separately using hot water and a heavy-duty detergent. Line dry clothing if practical.

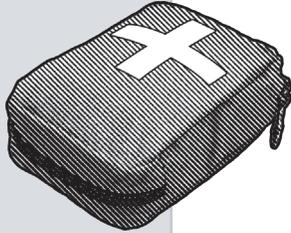


### **Pesticide Spills**

- Know what is spilled to be aware of your exposure. At a minimum, wear rubber gloves when cleaning up spills.
- If a spill occurs, clean it up promptly. Do not leave the spill unattended. If help is necessary, send someone else.

- Don't wash a spill away**—runoff can damage non-target plants or pollute surface and groundwater. Sprinkle spills with sawdust or kitty litter, sweep the mixture into a plastic garbage bag and dispose of unusable pesticide product as stated in the “Safe Disposal” section.

### First Aid



- Do basic first aid and **get medical help immediately!** Check the label for first aid information.
- If pesticide spills on your **skin**, wash the area with soap and water. Remove and discard contaminated clothing.
- When a pesticide gets into the **eyes**, flush the eye slowly and gently with water for 10 to 15 minutes.
- When someone **inhales** pesticide vapor, move the individual to fresh air. If unconscious, give artificial respiration.
- Read the pesticide label** to find out if you should induce vomiting or give a conscious person water or milk if he or she has swallowed a pesticide.

### Safe Disposal

- Avoid disposal problems! Purchase only what you need.
- Never flush unused pesticides down the toilet, sink or storm drain. Improper disposal can harm aquatic plants and wildlife.
- Do not put pesticide products directly into the garbage. Dispose of unused pesticide by using it as the label directs or find someone who will use it.
- If pesticide is not usable, contact your county health office regarding their disposal policies and programs. Most counties have household hazardous waste collection programs.
- Triple rinse empty glass, plastic and metal pesticide containers. Fill empty containers  $\frac{1}{4}$  full of water, cover tightly, shake and then add the rinse water to the spray tank; repeat three times. Wrap the empty container in newspaper and dispose of with your household waste or as directed on the label.
- Thoroughly shake or pat paper containers to remove as much pesticide as possible, and use the pesticide. Dispose of paper containers with normal household waste.
- Do not reuse empty pesticide containers.
- Never attempt to burn pesticide containers in the fireplace, wood stove or burn barrel. Do not put containers in trash compactors.