

Bulletin

Chemical spray drift

Agricultural chemicals applied through spraying have the potential to drift away from the target areas. This is known broadly as spray drift. Spray drift has the potential to cause injury or damage to plants, animals, environment or property, and can affect human health.

A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of workers and others, including surrounding land users, are not put at risk from activities associated with spraying including the risks associated with spray drift.

Plan before spraying

Chemical spraying is safe when performed by a responsible operator, who follows the manufacturers' recommendations, including personal safety requirements. However, undesirable spray drift can occur when chemicals are misused or risks associated with this activity are not carefully evaluated and appropriate controls identified.

Some considerations before spraying include:

- a property management plan that includes spray drift awareness zones and potential buffer areas
- notifying neighbours
- using correct chemicals and equipment for the job
- optimal weather conditions, including temperature
- your own and others Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- supervision, training or competency requirements to undertake the task.

Further information and relevant legislation

The Northern Territory Farmers Association can provide information and support on industry best practices for chemical spraying and can be contacted on 08 8983 3233.

Legislation

Waste Management and Pollution Control Act and Regulations

- Administered by the Northern Territory Environmental Protection Authority (NTEPA), deals primarily with pollution impacts associated with spray drift, as well as providing a central reporting hotline for pollution related issues
- Further information is available from the NTEPA website
- Complaints regarding spray drift should be made to Pollution Response Line: Free Call 1800 064 567.

Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act and Regulations

- Administered by the Chemical Service Branch of the Department of Primary Industry and Resources (DPIR), deals primarily with complaints associated with damage to agricultural produce, animals or agricultural land from spray drift
- Further information is available from the DPIR website
- Complaints concerning damage to agricultural produce, animals or land should be directed in writing to the Chemical Adviser, Chemical Services - Berrimah Farm, PO Box 3000, Darwin NT 0801, Telephone 08 8999 2344 or email chemicals@nt.gov.au.

Contact us

For further information please contact us on 1800 019 115, via email at ntworksafe@nt.gov.au or go to the NT WorkSafe website at www.worksafe.nt.gov.au.