

## Work environment – Rural safety

15.04.14

## Pesticides &gt;

**This bulletin outlines some simple safety guidelines for those working in the rural industry and is one of a series on Rural Industry safety.**

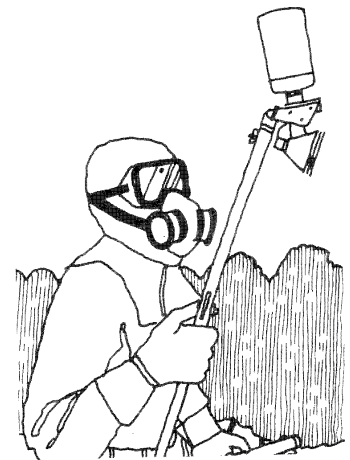
**Toxicity of pesticides**

All pesticides must be used in accordance with registered labels. Some pesticides can be very hazardous if not used correctly.

Toxicity varies with the type of pesticide, the formulation, the dilution and method of absorption into the body and how often and for how long you are exposed. The effect a pesticide has on a person will also depend on personal differences, such as body weight, and state of health. Harm to health may occur suddenly or develop gradually over years.

Pesticides enter the body through:

- Skin contact including eyes.
- Inhalation of fumes, vapours and dusts
- Accidental absorption while eating, drinking or smoking.

**Read the label and the MSDS**

The *Work Health Act 1986* requires you to have available adequate information. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) provide detailed information on treatment and symptoms as well as chemical data. MSDSs should be available from your chemical supplier.

**Apply pesticides safely**

- Use the least toxic pesticide available for control of the pest.
- Ensure only the recommended rate of pesticide is used.
- Wear protective clothing and equipment appropriate to the pesticide as described on the label.
- Prepare only enough for immediate use.
- Keep a record of the use and results.
- Ensure equipment works properly and does not leak.
- Cover feed and water containers near areas where livestock are grazing.
- Don't eat, drink or smoke while pouring, mixing or spraying.
- Don't pour concentrated pesticides into tanks above shoulder height.
- Never work alone if you are using a highly toxic pesticide.

putting safety first &gt;



## Spraying

- Spray with minimal drift and preferably in low wind conditions. Spray in the early morning or late afternoon when humidity is higher to reduce the potential for spray drift.
- Never spray in high wind conditions.
- Use a suction method of transferring pesticides to a spray tank. A vortex mixing system can also be used where the pesticide concentrate is added to a water supply during spraying without having to be pre-mixed.
- Prevent nozzles from becoming blocked by using the correct filters and pesticide formulation and ensure that water and equipment are clean.
- Clear blocked nozzles using a soft bristle brush, or compressed air. Never suck or blow blocked nozzles to clear them.

## Clean up

- Thoroughly clean all spraying and protective equipment where run-off will not contaminate the environment or create a hazard.
- Wash work clothing separately from domestic clothing or use disposable clothing.
- Wash yourself well after a spray operation.
- Wash hands with soap and water after handling pesticides before eating, drinking, going to the toilet or smoking.

## Take precautions

- Include in a first aid kit - a towel, clean clothing, an approved resuscitation mask for expired air resuscitation, disposable eye wash bottle and eye wash solution, soap, nail brush, and clear instructions on what to do with all this equipment. This kit should be kept handy and protected from dust and dirt.
- Keep fresh water close by for washing.
- Advise someone where you are going and how long you intend to be gone. Otherwise, ensure you have a two-way radio for emergency calls.
- It is useful for at least one member of the family or a contract team to attend first aid courses.
- Before use, check the labels and material safety data sheets or other safe handling guides of your pesticides to see what emergency treatment or procedures may be required and make suitable arrangements.
- Stop work immediately and seek medical attention if there is any sign of muscular spasm, chest pains, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, blurred vision, excessive saliva in the mouth or difficulty in breathing. Suspect pesticide poisoning if you develop these symptoms.
- If regularly using toxic pesticides, an annual medical examination is recommended before and after the spraying season. You may require more frequent health surveillance with some chemicals.
- For **skin contact**, wash with soap and water, and rinse with clean water. Remove any contaminated clothing and seek medical advice.
- For **eye contact**, hold eye open under running water for 15 minutes. Seek medical advice.
- For **swallowing**, ring POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE - **131126**.

**APPLY pesticides safely. Read the label and MSDS BEFORE you start.**

**Be sure to:**

- read labels and MSDSs carefully;
- wear appropriate protective clothing while spraying and mixing;
- know what effects the pesticides may have on you;
- Know correct first aid procedures for use with various pesticides

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