Landscaping – Pesticides – Precautions Fact Sheet



WHY SHOULD I BE CAREFUL WHEN USING PESTICIDES?

Pesticides can be hazardous if not used safely. Pesticides can enter the body in three ways—by mouth, through the skin and eyes, and through inhalation (breathing into the lungs).

READ labels carefully—one section of the label will tell you about the toxicity of the product when it enters the body.

There are many tips in other Landscaping OSH Answers documents.

- What are some key factors to remember when using pesticides?
- Be trained in the correct use and handling of pest control products – some products can be used by specially trained and certified personnel.
- Become familiar with regulations that apply to pesticide use and follow all regulatory requirements.
- Minimize use of pesticides where possible.
- Choose correct pesticide for the job. Only use the pesticide for its specific purpose (e.g., only use pesticides indoors if specifically stated to be used indoors).
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing when handling and spraying pesticide products.
- Follow the precautions that appear on the label.
- Inspect pesticide containers for leaks before handling.
- Contact power utility to determine proper distances between spray nozzle and power lines.
- Learn to recognize the typical signs of poisoning and the correct first aid procedures.
- Stop work and seek medical attention immediately if you feel ill during pesticide use or you notice signs in a co-worker.
- Have washing facilities as close as possible to mixing and loading sites.
- Keep products in their original labelled packages.
- Mix pesticides using equipment reserved only for that purpose. Mixing and loading areas should be design to contain any spills and facilitate cleanup.
- Fill mixing tanks about one third full with water before adding pesticide concentrate.
- Tap sides of containers to ensure that any remaining wettable powder falls into the spray tank.
- Keep containers below eye level to minimize splashes to the face.
- Use proper tools to open a container. Work in a well-ventilated area.
- Stand upwind of all opening, pouring and mixing operations, if working outdoors.

- Ensure that all spraying equipment is in good repair and properly calibrated.
- Use the proper nozzle for job. Control spray angle and droplet size. The wider the angle and the smaller the droplets, the greater the potential for drift.
- Stand and apply so that the wind blows the pesticide away from you.
- Wait until the treated surface has dried completely before entering the area. The directions on the label will provide this information.
- Dispose of empty containers according to directions on the label.
- Familiarize yourself with disposal arrangements.
- Ensure effective storage.
- Wash face and hands thoroughly after completing mixing operation.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking, smoking or using the toilet.
- Shower thoroughly, with special attention to hair and fingernails, after each pesticide application or at the end of the work shift.
- Change clothes daily and more often if any contamination occurs.
- Wash contaminated clothing separately from normal, family laundry.

What should I not do when working with pesticides?

- Do not work alone when handling pesticides.
- Do not handle containers roughly.
- Do not allow other people or pets into the treatment area.
- Do not mix different pesticides together unless specifically instructed by the manufacturer.
- Do not guess at the amount of pesticide to mix or apply.
- Do not stir pesticides with your hands.
- Do not keep food, beverages, tobacco, cigarettes, cups or cutlery near work areas or in work clothes.
- Do not rub eyes or touch your mouth with hands while working with pesticides.
- Do not use mouth to siphon liquid materials or to blow out a clogged spray nozzle.
- Do not spray near electrical power lines.
- Do not fill tanks completely when spraying hilly areas using spraying equipment pulled by a tractor.
- Do not make sharp turns.
- Do not spray if wind speed is more than 8 km/h (5 mph) or if air temperature is above 30°C (86°F). Consult regulations—ultra-low volume spraying may have different requirements.

What are some tips when using compressed air sprayers?

- Check hoses and connections for leaks.
- Ensure that the material the strap is made from does not absorb chemicals.
- Secure sprayer lid before lifting.
- Place the unit on a waist-high surface before slipping shoulder straps on or off.
- Walk upright to avoid any leakage through filling caps or air-bleed holes.
- Check clothing periodically, especially the back of pants, for pesticide deposit.
- Do not walk backwards while carrying compressed air sprayer.

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