

PESTICIDE SAFETY



Information

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

N No. 2

Storing, Moving, and Disposing of Pesticides in Non-Agricultural Settings

Pesticides are poisonous and must be stored, moved, and disposed of with caution. Pesticides are a hazard for the environment and for other people, particularly children. If you follow the directions in this leaflet, you can help prevent accidents with pesticides.

SAFE PESTICIDE STORAGE

No job is finished until the pesticides, containers, and equipment have been put away properly. Always remember to store all of your materials safely before you clean up and go home, or move on to the next job. While you are cleaning up and putting away the pesticides, containers, and equipment, you must wear all the personal protective equipment (PPE) you used on the job. Consider wearing gloves and other protective equipment even if they aren't required on the label. Spills and accidents often occur as pesticides are being put away.

How Should Pesticides Be Stored?

Every year children are poisoned from eating or drinking pesticides that someone did not put away or throw out correctly. Keep pesticides and their empty containers either in a locked area or under the control of a person who can keep others away. If the pesticides are not locked up, the person in control of the pesticides must be able to see the pesticides at all times to keep others away.

The label will tell you the right way to store the pesticide. Read and follow these directions. If you have to store pesticides in the same place as fertilizers, keep them apart. Pesticides and fertilizers can react with each other and start a fire.



SAFETY TIP

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Always read the label before applying a pesticide.

IF YOU CANNOT READ IT, ask your supervisor to tell you what it says.

Do not store pesticides near food, animal feed, or personal protective equipment (PPE). They can become contaminated with pesticide, and make people or animals sick. Here are some acceptable ways to store pesticides and empty containers:

- A locked, fenced area.
- A lockable storage compartment.
- A truck or trailer with locked side racks. (The tops of the racks should be at least six feet above the ground).

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Make sure all the pesticide containers are labeled.
- Close container lids tightly.
- Check containers for leaks, breaks, or weak spots. Tell your supervisor if there is a problem.
- Never put pesticides in containers used for food, drink, or household products.
- DO NOT take home any pesticide that you use at work.
- Keep the storage area locked when you are not using it.
- Post signs around storage areas where pesticides with “Danger” or “Warning” signal words are stored.
- Follow the instructions on the label. Many pesticide containers tell you not to reuse or re-fill the container.



Never store pesticides in food or drink containers.

MOVING PESTICIDES SAFELY

Accidents can happen even when you are moving pesticides a short distance. If there is an accident, the pesticide can make you and others sick, or contaminate the environment.

What Do I Need to Know About Moving Pesticides?

Follow these rules:

- Never carry pesticides inside your car, van, or truck cab. Pesticides can cause injury or death if they spill on you or your passengers. Spills on seat covers may be impossible to get out. The pesticide may make people sick days or weeks later if it is not cleaned up properly.
- Never move pesticides in the same compartment as food, feed, clothing, or people.
- Close container lids tightly.
- Vehicles make turns, sudden starts, and stops. Secure pesticide containers in an upright position to prevent spills.
- If the pesticide has been put in another container, you must label this container. The label must have the name of the pesticide, its signal word (Danger, Warning, Caution), and the name and address of the person responsible for the container and the pesticide.
- Never let your vehicle out of your sight when you are moving pesticides in an open bed truck.



Always make sure pesticide service containers are properly labeled.

RINSING CONTAINERS SAFELY

Disposable containers must be rinsed as soon as they are emptied. The label may have specific directions for you to follow when rinsing the container. If you are using a closed system, the equipment may do the rinsing. Otherwise you can use one of these methods:

METHOD #1 (triple rinsing)

1. Wear all the required PPE.
2. Fill the pesticide container about 1/4 full with water.
3. Close it tightly and shake it.
4. Pour all of this rinse water into the mix tank so it will be applied with the pesticide. Allow container to drain for 30 seconds after normal emptying.
5. Repeat steps 2, 3, and 4 at least two more times.

METHOD #2 (for equipment with a rinsing unit)

1. Wear all the required PPE.
 2. Put the opening of the container over the nozzle of the machine so the liquid will drain into the tank.
 3. Turn the nozzle on and rinse until clean.
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PESTICIDE SPILL CLEAN-UP

If the pesticide spill is on a public road, immediately call 911 and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) at 1-800-852-7550. If anyone has been contaminated or injured by the spill, administer first aid and contact your supervisor. For more information on first aid, ask your employer for the N-4 safety leaflet.

Set up cones or caution tape to keep people out of the spill area. If the spill is indoors, get out of the building and ventilate the area. The label may have detailed instructions for how to clean up a spill. Most labels have a toll-free number you can call if there is a spill to get specific guidance on spill clean-up. If the label is not specific, put on all PPE the label says, then follow these steps:

- **Control** the spill: Stand the container upright, shut off the mixing or application equipment, or put the leaking container into another container.
- **Contain** the spill: Use absorbent material to keep the product from spreading, use "snakes" or pillows from a spill kit, or make a dike of soil, sod, or other material around the spill area.
- **Clean** up the spill:
 - o Soak up liquid spills with absorbent materials like cat litter, sand, or clay.
 - o If the pesticide or absorbent material is likely to blow around, moisten it very slightly with water or cover it with a sweeping compound or plastic covering.
 - o If the spill is on soil, shovel out the top 2 to 3 inches of soil for disposal.
 - o Place clean-up materials or soil into a leak-proof container for proper disposal.
 - o Label the container with the pesticide name and signal word.

PESTICIDE SPILLS:

Control the spill

Contain the spill

Clean up the spill.



Notify your employer about the incident as soon as it is safe and practical to do so. If someone is contaminated or injured, your employer must notify Cal/OSHA of the incident.

EMPTY PESTICIDE CONTAINERS

Pesticide containers are never “empty.” They still have small amounts of pesticide in them even after they have been rinsed out. Empty containers must be treated and stored as if they still contain pesticides. This means the container must be labeled, must be stored in a locked area, and must have storage area posting signs if needed. Never toss containers into streams, ponds, fields, or vacant buildings. Keep track of every pesticide container you used for the job. Never allow children or other persons to come in contact with empty containers. Never use them for anything else. Empty containers must be disposed of the right way, following the label and federal, state, and local rules.

Your employer must know how to dispose of containers. The County Agricultural Commissioner can tell your employer how to dispose of empty containers, including recycling plastic containers.

PESTICIDE DISPOSAL

If you find pesticides in storage that are no longer used or are no longer legal to use, let your employer know. Proper disposal of unwanted or unused pesticides is important to keep people and the environment safe. Never throw unused pesticides in the trash, or pour leftover pesticides down a sink, toilet, sewer, street drain, or on the ground.

The label may tell you how to dispose of unwanted pesticides. If it is possible to do, the best way to dispose of a small amount of pesticide is to use it, according to the label directions.

In some cases, the pesticide may be able to be shipped back to the dealer or the maker of the pesticide.

Otherwise, your employer can contact the County Agricultural Commissioner or the county’s waste disposal agency for more information.

ARE THERE OTHER RULES?

Depending on the pesticide, there may be additional rules. If you are moving a pesticide, you must receive training about all the rules. Your employer should call the California Highway Patrol, Motor Carrier Safety Unit, if you are moving more pesticides than you will use in a few days.



If you don’t get all the information you need in your training or want to make a pesticide use complaint, you should call your County Agricultural Commissioner, or the DPR for more information. You can find the Commissioner’s number in your local white pages phone directory, by calling 1-87PestLine, or at: www.cdpr.ca.gov/exec/county/countymap

DPR’s Regional Offices are:

- Northern (Sacramento) (916) 603-7700
- Central (Clovis) (559) 297-3511
- Southern (Anaheim) (714) 279-7690



All safety leaflets are available at:
www.cdpr.ca.gov/worker-health-and-safety/education-series