



Pesticides (non-agricultural)

Pesticides cover a wide range of products including weedkillers, insecticides, fungicides, wood preservatives and rodenticides. Unnecessary use or accidental release can put the health of humans, other creatures, plants and the environment at risk. Simple but essential safety steps are given below which can help you make sure that pesticides are stored and used safely, and you may find them useful as a safety checklist.

- Step 1** Make sure staff are trained to recognise approved pesticides and understand the problems which may arise in storing and using them. Get safety data sheets for all the pesticides that you use from your suppliers. All approved pesticides for sale must carry a MAPP (Ministry Approved Pesticide Product) number.
- Step 2** Store pesticides on non-absorbent surfaces away from food, sources of heat or ignition. Make sure they are protected from the weather and kept in a locked store which is able to manage any leakages. Keep products in their original containers and rotate the stock. Larger stores should be registered with BASIS (British Agrochemical Standards Inspection Scheme). Phone 01335 343945.
- Step 3** Check stock for leaking or damaged containers or packs, that liquids are being stored upright, and that labels are present and can be easily read.
- Step 4** Have arrangements in place to deal with accidental releases and fire. For example, provide sand for soaking up spillages. Keep suitable firefighting equipment close by and train staff in how to use it.
- Step 5** Always assess pesticide applications in terms of preventing accidental or uncontrolled exposure at all stages. Consider enclosed handling systems, remote-controlled equipment and organising work to keep people out of treated areas. Always follow the manufacturer's safety instructions and keep records of all pesticide applications.
- Step 6** Train staff who will be mixing or using pesticides so that they know how to use both the product and the application equipment properly. For certain pesticide uses, the operator must have a certificate of competence or work under direct supervision of a certificate holder. Check whether these rules apply.
- Step 7** Pesticides being transported inside a vehicle should be placed in a secure container and separated from the driver and passengers by a barrier that chemicals and vapour cannot get through.
- Step 8** Provide operators with suitable protective clothing and make sure that it is worn, for example, faceshields, overalls, aprons and gloves. Provide emergency eye-wash facilities.
- Step 9** Make sure there are suitable changing and washing facilities so operators can clean themselves before eating, drinking, smoking or leaving work.
- Step 10** Always follow the manufacturer's advice about getting rid of the waste product, containers, contaminated clothing and washings, to avoid polluting land, air or surface water.
- Step 11** Never allow operators to eat, drink or smoke while using pesticides, or to suck or blow by mouth at any nozzle or pipe connection.

Case Study

A company was prosecuted and fined when a casual employee became ill after applying a pesticide. The employee did not have a certificate of competence and was not given personal protective equipment.