



Pesticides (Non-Agricultural)

Pesticides cover a wide range of products including weed-killers, 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 to ensure the safe storage and use of pesticides, and you may find them useful as a safety checklist.

STEP 1 Ensure staff are trained to recognise approved pesticides and understand the problems which may arise in their storage and use. Obtain safety data sheets for all pesticides from your suppliers. All approved pesticides for sale must carry a M.A.F.F. number.

STEP 2 Store pesticides on non-absorbent surfaces away from foodstuffs, sources of heat or ignition and ensure they are protected from the elements. Stores should be secure. Keep products in their original containers and practice stock rotation. Larger stores should be registered with B.A.S.I.S. (British Agrochemical Standards Inspection Scheme) Tel. 01335 - 343945.

STEP 3 Check stock for leaking/damaged containers or packs, that liquids are being stored upright, and that labels are present and legible.

STEP 4 Have arrangements in place to deal with accidental releases and fire. For example keep an emergency trolley with equipment for containing and mopping up spillages, and suitable fire fighting equipment close at hand. Train staff in spillage procedures.

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 the organisation of work to keep people out of treated areas. Always follow the manufacturers 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. Certain pesticide uses require the operator to have a certificate of competence or to work under the direct supervision of a certificate holder. Check whether these rules apply.

STEP 7 Provide operators with suitable protective clothing and ensure it is worn, e.g. faceshields, overalls, aprons and gloves. Provide emergency eye wash facilities.

STEP 8 Ensure adequate changing and washing facilities to enable operators to clean themselves before eating, drinking, smoking or leaving work.

STEP 9 Always consult the manufacturer's advice regarding disposal of waste product, containers, contaminated clothing and washings, to avoid polluting land, air or surface water.

STEP 10 Never permit operators to eat, drink or smoke whilst working 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 hold a certificate of competence and was not provided with personal protective equipment.

■ For further information:

The Safe Use of Pesticides for Non-Agricultural Purposes (Approved Code of Practice - L9), H.S.C.. ISBN 0-7176-0542-6 H.S.E. Books