



Information

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Check out the Pesticide Education and Assessment Program web site at <http://pesticide.umd.edu>

Pesticide Safe Use Checklist

Pesticide Information Leaflet No. 11

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A **pesticide** may be any chemical used to control a pest. The pest may be an insect, fungus, weed, slug, or plant disease agent. Therefore, insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides are all types of pesticides. Some pesticides are extremely toxic, while others are only very slightly toxic to humans, beneficial insects, desirable plants, and wildlife. Each pesticide label contains a great deal of information on how to use that specific material. **The importance of reading and following all label directions cannot be overemphasized.** This leaflet provides a checklist of safe practices to be used in conjunction with the label directions anytime you plan to use a pesticide.

BEFORE USING A PESTICIDE:

✓ Check the label:

- to be sure the pest you need to control is listed on the label;
- to be sure the site or plant to which you intend to apply the pesticide is listed on the label;
- to see if any special protective clothing or equipment is necessary;
- to find out what equipment to use to apply the pesticide;

- to see whether the pesticide is toxic to certain plants -- it may be necessary to remove or cover plants;

- to be sure you are applying the pesticide at the right time.

✓ Buy only enough pesticide for one, or at most, two years. Pesticides stored longer may degrade and become less effective.

✓ Remove or cover pet food and water dishes and fish tanks.

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DURING APPLICATION:

- ✓ Always wear long trousers, a long-sleeved shirt, socks, and shoes when applying any pesticide. Other protective equipment, such as impermeable (not cotton) gloves, boots, a respirator, or goggles, may be necessary or desirable for extra protection.
- ✓ Do not wear leather shoes, boots, or gloves while handling pesticides. Leather absorbs pesticides and cannot be decontaminated easily.
- ✓ Take care to avoid pesticides coming into contact with your eyes, mouth, or skin.
- ✓ Avoid breathing spray mists. Open the windows when spraying indoors.
- ✓ Keep children and pets out of the treated area until the spray has dried or the dust has settled; longer if the label lists a longer reentry period.
- ✓ Wash your hands with soap and water before eating, smoking, or using the toilet to avoid transferring any residues.
- ✓ Stand upwind while mixing and applying pesticides.
- ✓ Never apply a pesticide where it could contact food, utensils, or food preparation areas, unless the label allows for such contact.
- ✓ If you are applying the pesticide to a food crop, check the label to see how many days you must wait before harvesting.

- ✓ Unless the label specifically allows such use, never apply a pesticide where it could contact water sources and avoid applying to bare ground.
- ✓ Follow label directions for method of application carefully. When practical, use spot treatments rather than broadcast sprays. If the label specifies "crack and crevice" treatment, apply only as a very narrow band.
- ✓ Never apply a pesticide at a higher rate than the label directs.

AFTER USING A PESTICIDE:

- ✓ Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after applying a pesticide. Shower as soon as possible.
- ✓ Wash all clothing worn during mixing and application separately from household laundry. Use a heavy duty liquid detergent and hot water. Dry the clothes in a hot dryer or outside in the sun.
- ✓ Keep pesticide measuring utensils separate from household and kitchen utensils.
- ✓ Store pesticides only in their original containers. Keep them away from food, feed, seed, and fertilizers in a locked building or cabinet.
- ✓ Dispose of empty pesticide containers in accordance with label directions and state and local requirements. *Pesticide Information Leaflets No. 13 and No. 38* provide guidelines on disposal.