

PESTICIDE STORAGE GUIDELINES

Prepared by Hilary A. Sandler

Read and follow the pesticide label; it contains information concerning directions for use, application site and rate, storage and disposal, active ingredients, protective equipment needs, etc. **Pesticides should always be stored in their original containers**, according to label requirements, with the label intact.

Avoid carry-over of pesticides; buy only what you will need for the current season. In selecting an area for storing/handling pesticides, human and environmental safety should be foremost considerations. In particular, the area should be evaluated for potential risks to human health due to accidental spills, fires or contamination of drinking water supplies. Pesticides should not be stored over soil that is coarse or sandy or over surfaces that drain easily such as gravel because the pesticide can then easily move through the soil into the ground water.

A well-designed storage facility has four components: 1) a storage cabinet, room or building, 2) a mixing area, 3) an area for loading and rinsing spray equipment, and 4) a place to store and secure equipment and records. Depending on the size of your operation, you should have the appropriately sized storage facility. It should be large enough to accommodate new chemicals, opened containers, and unused material awaiting disposal but small enough to discourage significant carry-over from year to year. A pesticide storage facility should be on the ground floor with direct access to the outside. The storage area should be **locked at all times** and legibly and **prominently identified** as a place of pesticide storage. The area should be well ventilated either by windows or a fan to avoid the build-up of fumes.

Pesticides and fertilizers should be stored separately. Pesticides should be separated by type (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides) to avoid cross contamination and possible accidental misuse. Flammable and non-flammable pesticides should be stored in separate areas. Pesticides should never be stored alongside food, feed or seed. Pesticides in containers that can be damaged by moisture should be kept off the floor.

Dry pesticides (e.g., granular, powder) should be stored in a cool, dry place. Liquid or emulsified products may have restricted temperature ranges at which they should be stored. **CHECK THE LABEL!** In general, liquid or emulsified materials should not be stored at temperatures below 45°F or at temperatures that frequently exceed 100°F. These pesticides may form crystals at the lower temperatures. If crystals form, bring the pesticide into a warm place and gently agitate the pesticide container to re-dissolve the pesticide.

Affix fire extinguishers on the outside and the inside of the building. Be sure to inform your local Fire Department which buildings on your property are pesticide storage facilities. Post a list of materials outside of the building if possible and/or give a list to your local fire department so they know what is inside.

Disposal Resources. Some pesticides (but not all) are regulated as hazardous waste when disposed. The Department of Transportation (DOT) regulates the transport of hazardous materials. The Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) regulates and provides guidance on hazardous waste disposal. Properly dispose of used containers. Check with your local supplier for any available recycling programs. For further information, contact Steve Antunes-Kenyon, MDAR Pesticide Program Operations Coordinator at (617) 626-1784 or Hotze Wijnja at (617) 626-1771.

For more information, go to MA Energy and Environmental Affairs, Pesticide Storage and Disposal: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/pesticides/pesticide-storage-and-disposal.html>
MassDEP: www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-environmental-protection
Southeast office: 20 Riverside Drive, Lakeville, MA. (508) 946-2700 (main office)

U.S. DOT: <http://phmsa.dot.gov/hazmat>
Hazardous Materials Information Center: 1-800-467-4922
Eastern Region Contact (Trenton, NJ): (609) 989-2256