



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SERIES

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Proper Pesticide Storage

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Site Selection

A pesticide storage facility should be located in an area where flooding is unlikely. The storage building must be situated away from where people and animals live to avoid harm in case of fire. It should be downwind and downhill from sensitive areas, such as houses, ponds, and play areas. The facility should also be in a place where wind-blown pesticide dusts and particles would not cause problems. There must be no chance that runoff or drainage from the site could contaminate surface or groundwater supplies. Be sure that drinking water wells and sink holes which have direct access to groundwater are at least 300 feet away from your pesticide storage facility.

Setting Up The Storage Area

All pesticides must be kept in a facility that can be locked and posted as a pesticide storage area. This facility must keep the pesticides dry and out of direct sunlight. There must be sufficient insulation to keep the chemicals from freezing or overheating. The storage facility must be fire resistant, including a cement floor, an exhaust fan for ventilation, and good lighting. The door must be kept locked when the building is not in use.

Weatherproof warning signs should be hung over every door and window. These should read: **DANGER--PESTICIDES. KEEP OUT.**

All pesticides must be stored in their original containers with the labels attached in good readable condition. Do not store pesticides near food, feed, seed, or animals. Check containers regularly for damage and leaks. If a container is damaged, transfer the contents to a container that has held exactly the same pesticide. Clean up spills with proper absorbent material (refer to information on cleaning up pesticide spills). Keep an up-to-date inventory of the pesticides in your storage facility. Windows are good because fire hoses and other firefighting equipment can be used through them. They should, however, be barred so that children and other curious people cannot get in.

A drainage system should be built to collect any runoff water. Pesticides which may escape during tank rinsing, spills, seepage from the storage, and heavy runoff from firefighting or floods must be controlled. Otherwise, they may contaminate surface or groundwater supplies. Dikes, collecting pools, and washing slabs with sumps would provide a proper drainage system. All the collected runoff water can be applied to a labeled site, provided that the concentration of pesticide does not exceed the labeled rate. The diluted pesticide must be applied immediately; otherwise, it will have to be disposed of as hazardous waste.

A good supply of liquid detergent or hand cleaner and water is a must in a storage area. It is convenient for filling tanks, cleaning off equipment, and for general clean up. It is also quick first aid in a poisoning emergency.

Absorptive clay, activated charcoal, vermiculite, pet litter, or sawdust should be readily available at the storage site to soak up spills and leaks. Hydrated lime and sodium hypochlorite (Clorox or other bleach) should be on hand to neutralize the pesticide in an emergency. A shovel, broom, dust pan, sealable container for sweepings, and fire extinguisher must also be in every storage area.

Arranging Your Storage Area

A pesticide storage area, whether it is a room or a whole building, should be used only for pesticides and pesticide equipment. Never store or use food, drinks, silverware, tobacco, or smoking equipment in a storage or loading area. Livestock feed, living plants, and seeds should not be stored with or below pesticides.

Avoid Hot Places--Glass and metal containers of liquid pesticides should be stored where they are not in the sun or near other sources of heat such as steam pipes. Heat will cause the liquid to expand so that the contents will be under pressure. When the container is opened, the pesticide may splash out on you. No pesticide should become overheated. Some formulations will catch on fire if they get too hot. Others lose their strength and break down when they are exposed to heat, sunlight, or freezing temperatures.

Organize Storage--Herbicides should be stored in a special place apart from other pesticides. Some herbicides can vaporize (become a gas) and get into other nearby pesticides. When the contaminated pesticide is used, the herbicide vapors in it may injure or kill crops and sensitive plants.

All highly toxic pesticides should be stored together in a special area. You can take special precautions to keep from being exposed when working in that area. Also, you are less likely to use a highly toxic pesticide by accident.

A special area should be used for surplus pesticides and their containers being held for disposal. They should be grouped together according to how you plan to dispose of them and should be plainly labeled. Pesticide rinsate from spray tanks or equipment should be placed in appropriate containers with labels stating the percentage of active ingredient. This will help prevent mix-ups that result in improper disposal and even accidental reuse.

Do not store fertilizer in close proximity with pesticides. The extreme oxidation characteristics of fertilizer products will cause metal containers of pesticides to rust and deteriorate rapidly.

For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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