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Proper Cleanup For Pesticide Spills

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Containing Pesticide Spills

In order to protect worker safety and preserve environmental quality, pesticide spills must be dealt with in a safe and efficient manner. Avoid skin contact and inhalation of pesticide fumes. Always wear protective clothing when performing cleanup, including a proper respirator if specified by label instructions. You must contain or stop the spread of small liquid or dust spills by covering with earth, sand, or other suitable absorbent materials. Larger, liquid spills can be contained by building a dam of earth or sand around the spill and contaminated area. Solid pesticides, such as granules, should be swept up when possible. When granules are spilled, avoid contact with water to prevent pesticide release.

Application Of Spilled Pesticide Versus Disposal

Place leaking or badly damaged pesticide containers in heavy duty plastic bags, and place the plastic bags in an over-sized drum. All damaged containers must be labeled according to contents if repacked in an oversized drum. These pesticides in damaged containers must be used according to the label directions as soon as feasible to minimize further hazards to workers and the environment.

Pesticide spills can be applied to the properly labeled site immediately after being spilled, provided that the labeled rate is not exceeded and all other conditions of labeled application are met, even if there are no known pests present for which the pesticide was intended to control. Such legal application prevents costly disposal of spilled pesticide as a hazardous waste.

If the spilled pesticide cannot be applied immediately to a suitable labeled site, it must be placed along with the absorbent material in heavy duty plastic bags which are then placed inside heavy duty fiber or metal drums, labeled as hazardous waste, and disposed as such. In Alabama, call the Alabama Department of Environmental Management at (334) 271-7700 or The Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries at (334) 240-7239 for details on disposal of such hazardous waste.

Disposal Of Contaminated Soil And Safety Equipment Used In Cleanup

Remember that all contaminated soil and any pesticide soaked clothing must be treated as hazardous waste as well as any other pesticide contaminated articles used in cleanup. Avoid the use of water in cleanup since most pesticides are soluble in water, thus, magnifying all cleanup efforts.

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

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