

# The Food and Environment Protection Act

WITH the season upon us and the 'alligators' thick all around us, there is the problem of what to do about the new regulations. You might wonder, why us? What did we do to deserve this? The answer of course is nothing, the record of safe application of pesticides in greenkeeping is outstanding. But we must accept that the new law is necessary to control the activities of all who use pesticides.

The word pesticide itself causes confusion. It means weedkillers, insecticides, fungicides and wood preservatives but not fertilizers. On the golf course there are things to be done to ensure that when the inspector visits, all will be well.

The way pesticides are stored leaves a lot to be desired. Some stores are almost non-existent, others are well constructed but the pesticides are in with the fertilizers, tools, etc.

In future, pesticides will be stored separately and will need to be securely locked. The guidelines on a typical chemical store are intended for use by large users of pesticides; there are as yet no specific guidelines on small stores. A small pesticide store will contain less than 200 units of pesticide i.e. litres or kilos or a mixture of both.

## SENSIBLE APPROACH

The most sensible approach on the golf course would be to have the store within an existing building and built to meet the following requirements:

1. Insulated from extremes of temperature and have high and low ventilation.
2. Have strong non-absorbent shelving.
3. Be able to contain any spillage within the store area, a concrete floor with minimum

6" bund across the door.

4. Have a stock list inside (and a copy in the office), a standard hazard sign on the outside of the door.
5. First Aid, including eyewash and washing facilities, should also be nearby.

Before you rush out and buy bricks, sand etc., pause a while and cost the job. If you only have a need to use 200 units or less you might find it a more economical proposition to buy a ready made portable store. If you are intending to build the store yourself, add the cost of your time, remembering that the job must be done soon, and have you really got the time to spare?

The Chemsafe sold by Burts and Harvey at around £500 is ideal, being uncomplicated and approved as a store for pesticides up to 200 units.

Finally, before you do anything, check with your local Health and Safety Executive Inspector that what you propose to do will meet with his approval.

## SQUIRREL-LIKE

Greenkeepers do tend to hang on to their favourite pesticides, especially fungicides. This squirrel like habit has its problems, because only those pesticides that have current approval can be used. Disposal of old material by the local authority or authorised waste disposal contractor can be expensive so resist the squirrel syndrome! The inspector will check and won't be amused to see old cherished fungicides hidden in corners.

Providing those who spray pesticides do so only within the confines of their place or work, they need only be 'competent'. If however, spraying is carried out on other sites, the operator

must have a Certificate of Competence. A further consideration is that regardless of where the spraying is carried out, any person born on or after 31st December 1964 must have a Certificate of Competence or be supervised by a certificate holder.

A long period of service alone may not be sufficient to prove that a person is competent. Knowledge of one sprayer and using a small group of pesticides may not be regarded as competence. The problem here is that the proof of competence may not arise until there is an inspection or worse, an accident. The requirement to hold a Certificate of Competence takes effect from 1st January 1989, and many colleges and training centres are already booked up, so there is a need to tackle this problem soon.

The ultimate proof of competence is the possession of a certificate. Take the test; it is a very good qualification and may even be asked for in job interviews in the future.

Finally, examine your spraying operation and check that you are meeting your duties under the law "to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health of human beings, creatures and plants, to safeguard the environment and in particular to avoid pollution of water."

You will need a copy of the *Code of Practice for the use of Approved Pesticides in Amenity Areas*, available from John Shildrick, secretary of the National Turfgrass Council, 3 Ferrands Park Way, Harden, Bingley, West Yorkshire. BD16 1HZ. Cost £7 plus postage.

This important document gives detailed guidance on how to prepare for spraying, to calibrate, dispose of empty containers, clean out machines and more. In fact it should become the sprayer's bible!

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