

# Pesticide Safety: Never Compromise!



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As conducive growing conditions for turf and ornamental plants develop, the need and consequent use of pesticides including fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, and plant growth regulators typically increases. At the same time, the hustle and bustle of spring activities or projects can also seem to consume and/or overwhelm you, as a result it can be quite easy to become complacent when you are handling, mixing and loading, and applying pesticides.

For many of you, several months have elapsed (about five) since you last worked with pesticides; consequently, your familiarity and confidence of working with pesticides may be slightly "rusty." Remember **all** pesticides are toxic (to a degree) substances; none are inherently safe, they are designed to be toxic (kill) to the target pest. Despite this fact, when used according to the label directions, pesticides are also designed to be safe to those who use them when you follow the label and use common sense. For this reason, it is critical that you thoroughly and comprehensively read the pesticide label before you: 1) purchase; 2) mix; 3) apply; and 4) dispose of a pesticide, even if you have previously used or are familiar with a particular product.

The directions on a pesticide label are there for good reason: to help you get the maximum benefits with minimal risk. These benefits depend on the proper use of the product; using pesticides differently than the label directions will not only potentially jeopardize the performance of the product, but it is also against the law! Moreover, you can compromise the safety margin that is built into the product.

Pesticide safety should be considered at **all** times, including but not limited to: 1) purchasing (handling); 2) storing; 3) mixing and loading; 4) applying; and 5) disposal. Your safety as well as the safety of others, animals, and the environment are your highest priority. ALWAYS observe the safety precautions on the pesticide label. The label will explicitly provide you with the appropriate information that will enable to safely handle, store, mix/load, apply, and dispose of a pesticide. General precautions to enhance pesticide safety include:

- Read pesticide label carefully and completely
- Wear clean and personal protective equipment (PPE) listed on the label
- Do NOT eat, drink, or smoke when handling, mixing/loading, applying, or disposing of pesticides
- Do NOT allow pesticides to contact you skin
- Do NOT inhale or swallow pesticides

- Remove contaminated clothing at once and wash skin with soap and water, dispose of contaminated clothing properly
- Wash hands often
- Mix and load pesticides in an open area with adequate ventilation; NEVER mix or load pesticides in an enclosed area
- Use only recommended materials at recommended rates and by recommended methods of application. NEVER use a pesticide for purposes not specified on the label
- Check for and repair leaking hoses or connections before use
- NEVER use your hands to stir or to reach into a pesticide tank

Make sure you have all the necessary information on hand before an accident occurs. Such information should include:

- Phone number of Poison Control Center
- Name (common or active ingredient) of pesticide and manufacturer
- First Aid statement on label
- Method of pesticide exposure (inhalation, skin, or swallow)
- Time of exposure
- Symptoms of exposure
- Age and weight of victim

Pesticide safety begins with you, it is your responsibility to carefully and comprehensively read and follow the pesticide label. Of course this alone will not eliminate potential accidents associated with pesticides, however it will dramatically reduce the likelihood as well as prepare you to respond in an appropriate manner. ♻️



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