

PUTTING PESTICIDES ON ICE

As winter approaches, the question of how to store leftover pesticides becomes an important one in many parts of the country. Ordinarily, public attention tends to focus more closely on improper application of pesticides, but recent news reports have graphically demonstrated the consequences of improper pesticide storage.

By their very nature, pesticides require careful handling and use. If they are misused, they can cause serious damage to people, animals and plants. Most of the time, pesticide hazards can be reduced by advance planning, common sense and, most importantly, reading the labels on pesticide containers.

By following these general guidelines, the dangers involved in storing pesticides can be greatly reduced: 1) Always store pesticides in the original container with intact, legible labels. 2) Never use any kind of food or beverage container for mixing or storing pesticides. 3) Store in an area located away from human food or seed storage. 4) The storage area should provide cool, dry conditions with good ventilation. Direct sunlight should not strike pesticide containers. A heat source may be needed in regions with below-freezing temperatures. 5) The storage facility should be equipped with a secure lock. Only authorized people should have access to potentially dangerous chemicals. 6) The storage area should be equipped with a fire extinguisher as well as first aid materials. First aid equipment, especially an eye wash station, is particularly important if the area is used for mixing chemicals. 7) Maintain an inventory of pesticides, including the compound name, type, amount and date received and the amount and date used. It is also helpful to mark containers with the date they were received. 8) Keep containers tightly closed and check frequently for leakage. Faulty containers should be replaced before they create a hazard. 9) A concrete, washable floor is desirable, but wash water should not be allowed to flow into any open body of water. 10) Check pesticide container labels for any special storage requirements.

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