



Personal Protective Equipment

An Important Message for Anyone Who Works with Pesticides

Always read the precautions on the pesticide label before handling

Pesticide labels contain specific instructions on how the pesticide is intended to be used, and what steps to take to protect yourself and others from exposure. You are responsible for being aware of and following these instructions. Labels include stickers, tags, seals, leaflets, brochures and/or wrappers applied to or attached to the product package.

Wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is often required when handling commercial or restricted class products. PPE is any special clothing or equipment that is worn to minimize pesticide exposure and protect your health, for example, chemical resistant unlined gloves and footwear, long-sleeved shirt and long pants, socks, or a respirator. Studies have shown that wearing chemical resistant gloves and footwear can significantly reduce exposure.

As pesticides have specific uses, the label instructions will indicate the specific PPE to be worn or used. Health Canada determines the type of PPE to be worn based on extensive scientific review of a combination of the following risk factors:

- ▶ the toxicity of the pesticide;
- ▶ the formulation (dust, liquid, other);
- ▶ the activity (mixing, loading, spraying); and
- ▶ the extent of exposure (whether for a few minutes or repeatedly over a lifetime).

Regular hand and face washing with soap and water is essential. It is a good practice to keep soap and water with you wherever you are working.

Wear the recommended PPE and use any specialized equipment listed on the label for:

- ▶ Mixing, loading, applying (for example, spraying), clean-up, and repair;
- ▶ Handling a commodity that has been treated with pesticides, or equipment that was used to apply a pesticide; and
- ▶ Re-entering an area that has been treated with pesticides.



Do

- ▶ Read the label. It contains all of the important information you need to know.
- ▶ Wear all PPE as stated on the label.
- ▶ Store pesticides according to label statements. For some agricultural pesticides, this could be in a locked, signed and ventilated area.
- ▶ Wash your hands on a regular basis, especially before you eat, drink, smoke or go to the bathroom.
- ▶ Inform people nearby of areas treated with pesticides.
- ▶ Dispose of pesticide containers according to the label statement.

Do Not

- ▶ Do not store pesticides in unlabelled containers.
- ▶ Do not use a pesticide other than for its intended use.
- ▶ Do not apply more pesticide than is specified on the label.
- ▶ Do not breathe in pesticide spray or dust.
- ▶ Do not burn pesticides or pesticide containers.
- ▶ Do not pour pesticides down the drain.

Restricted Entry Interval

A restricted entry interval (sometimes referred to as REI) is the amount of time after a pesticide has been applied during which access to the treated area must be restricted. This time allows for the breakdown of pesticide residues to levels that do not pose a risk to health. Pesticide applicators are responsible for informing workers and others who may be on site after a pesticide is applied and while the restricted entry interval is in effect. Restricted entry level information is listed on the product label.

Pre-harvest Interval

Pre-harvest interval (sometimes referred to as PHI) is the time between the last application of a pesticide and the crop harvest. It is important to follow pre-harvest intervals to prevent unsafe levels of pesticide residue on food crops. Pre-harvest interval values, usually given in days, are listed on the product label.

Buffer Zone

A buffer zone is a protected area between the area being treated with pesticides and a sensitive environment or habitat (e.g. rivers, lakes, forests, residential areas) that must not be exposed to pesticides. It is important to follow buffer zone instructions to protect the surrounding environment from drifting pesticide through the air, soil or water. Buffer zone information is provided on the product label.

Proper Care and Use of PPE

- ▶ Store PPE out of reach of children and pets;
- ▶ Avoid touching 'clean' surfaces while wearing PPE (e.g.: steering wheel, door handles, counter tops), or thoroughly clean these surfaces afterwards with water and detergent;

- ▶ Never smoke, eat, drink or use the toilet after handling pesticides without first washing your hands;
- ▶ Wash the outside of gloves before removing them;
- ▶ If pesticide gets inside PPE, remove clothing immediately, shower or wash thoroughly, and change into clean clothing;
- ▶ Remove PPE in a pre-determined area separate from living or working areas;
- ▶ Wash hands and face and any exposed skin;
- ▶ Respirators should be stored in a sealed plastic bag until the next use, to preserve the life of the filter;
- ▶ Regularly change respirator cartridge filters;
- ▶ Repair/replace torn or broken PPE;
- ▶ After using pesticides, shower and change into clean clothes.

How to Launder PPE Clothing

- ▶ Treat all clothing worn during pesticide use as contaminated, and handle with chemical resistant gloves;
- ▶ Wash clothing after each pesticide use, separate from the family laundry;
- ▶ Use hot water, heavy-duty liquid detergent, the highest water level setting, and the longest wash cycle;
- ▶ If heavily soiled, wash PPE clothing two or three times;
- ▶ After washing, run the washing machine through a complete cycle with detergent;
- ▶ If possible, line-dry the clothing.

For more information, contact the Health Canada Pest Management Information Service at 1-800-267-6315.