

Pesticide

info

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PESTICIDES



California Department of Pesticide Regulation

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BRANCHES

Enforcement
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Northern Regional Office
916-376-8960

Central Regional Office
559-243-8111

Southern Regional Office
714-279-7690

Environmental Monitoring
916-324-4039

Fiscal Operations
916-324-1350

Information Technology
916-445-4110

Medical Toxicology
916-445-4233

Product Compliance
916-445-4159

Pest Management and Licensing
916-445-3914

Licensing/Certification
916-445-4038

Personnel
916-322-4553

Pesticide Registration
916-445-4400

Worker Health and Safety
916-445-4222

Read the label first!

The most valuable time spent in pest control is the time you take to read the pesticide label.

Labels tell you:

- How to *use* a product so it works like it should and doesn't hurt you, anyone else, or the environment.
- How to *store* the product safely.
- How to give first aid.
- Where to call for help or more information.

Label information helps you get maximum benefits from the pesticide at minimum risk. Reading the label saves money! It helps you buy the right product, buy the right amount for your needs, and use the right amount for the job.

Before you buy, read the label. Is the pest problem you have on it? Is the plant or place you want to use it on the label? Read the label again before using the pesticide, and every time you use it. How do you mix it? How is it applied? What do you need to do to protect yourself and others?

Take time to look at the whole label. Don't trust your memory. Label instructions can change. Using pesticides contrary to the label is illegal, may make the

product ineffective and, even worse, dangerous. A pesticide product label includes:

Common name and brand name

Some pesticides have "**common names**" that are easier to recognize than chemical names. For instance, carbaryl is the common name for the compound whose chemical name is 1-naphthyl N-methylcarbamate. Common names are generic and non-proprietary. Several companies may sell products with the same active ingredient using different "**brand names**"; the labels will have the same chemical or common name.

Ingredients

The "**active ingredient**" is the part of the product that kills or inhibits the target pest. The label must list the active ingredient (either the chemical or common name) and give the





LABELS TELL YOU:

How to use a product safely and effectively.

How to store the product safely.

First aid instructions.

Phone numbers to call for help or more information.

percentage by weight. **“Inert ingredients,”** also called **“other ingredients,”** are intentionally included in the product but not for their effect on the pest. They include solvents, emulsifiers, wetting agents and diluting substances. They are not necessarily chemically inert, and may have toxic properties. Inert ingredients do not need to be specified but their percentage must be listed.

EPA registration number

This number tells you that U.S. EPA has reviewed the product and found it can be used without risk if you follow the directions on the label properly. Don't buy or use any pesticide product that doesn't have an EPA registration number.

Signal words

Labels use three signal words, **Danger**, **Warning**, or **Caution**, to show a product's potential for making you sick if it isn't used correctly.

“Caution” appears on products that are least harmful to you.

“Warning” means a product is more harmful than one with a “Caution” label.

“Danger” means a product is poisonous or corrosive and should be used with extreme care.

Whatever the signal word, always follow the label instructions. Any substance—whether a pesticide, household cleaner, or over-the-counter medication—can be dangerous if not used correctly.

Precautionary statements

Besides the signal word, pay close attention to any warnings in the **“Precautionary statements.”** This section tells you about special precautions you should take. For example, you may need to wear long sleeves and pants, gloves, goggles, or other protective clothing and equipment. This is where you also find any extra protections needed for children or pets.

Pesticides can be useful but wrong or careless use can cause environmental damage. The label lists several ways to protect the environment. Follow these instructions to avoid harming beneficial insects (for example, bees), damaging nearby desirable plants, or polluting ground or surface water (with irrigation runoff or drift from treated areas).

First aid

If swallowing or inhaling the product or getting it in your eyes or on your skin could be harmful, the label will give you first aid instructions. The instructions are not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. **ALWAYS** call a doctor or a Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) for advice if you think pesticides made someone sick. When you call, try to have the pesticide container with you.

Most labels do say what the symptoms of pesticide illness are. To get this information, call the National Pesticide Information Center (1-800-858-7378) or your regional Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222).

Directions for use

This section tells you how to use the pesticide. You should make sure the pest you are trying to control is listed. This is your assurance that you are not wasting time and money on something that won't work. This section also tells you how much to use, and where, how and when you should apply the product. Always read and follow label directions. Be sure the pesticide is the right one for your pest problem—then use only the amount needed and no more.

Storage and disposal

Look here to find out how to store and dispose of leftover pesticide and empty containers safely. State or local laws may be stricter than federal requirements on the label. If you can't finish using a pesticide, check with your local solid waste management authority, environmental health department or county agricultural commissioner to find out if your community has a household hazardous waste collection program. You can also call 1-800-CLEANUP or go to www.cleanup.org for this information. Get the county agricultural commissioner's phone number in your local white pages under county government headings, or by calling 1-877-378-5463 (1-87PestLine). You can also get the commissioner's number on DPR's Web site, www.cdpr.ca.gov, and find more tips and information on safe pesticide use.



Single copies of this handout are available by calling your County Agricultural Commissioner's office, from DPR at 916-445-3974, or can be downloaded from DPR's Web site, www.cdpr.ca.gov, “Consumer Fact Sheets.”

Pesticide Complaint?

1-87PestLine
INFORMATION LINE

1-877-378-5463

