

Safety Matters

Provided by: Gallagher Risk Management - Tulsa

Working Safely With Herbicides and Pesticides

As part of your job, you handle, use and work around herbicides and pesticides. While these products are very effective in protecting plant life from pests, they can also pose health hazards. The good news is that you can prevent exposure to yourself and others by following these simple safety guidelines.

Read the Label

If a chemical is new to you, always read the full product label to learn about safe and proper use:

- If the label warns against exposure to the eyes, lungs, skin or clothing, wear the right gear to protect your body.
- Follow the directions on the label regarding how to apply the product and what equipment must be used.
- Notice the first-aid instructions in case of an accidental poisoning.
- Follow directions regarding how to store and dispose of the product after usage.

Protect Yourself

Your best line of defense against exposure to chemicals is wearing the right protective clothing for the job. This typically includes a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, non-absorbent gloves (no leather or fabric), rubber boots (no canvas or leather), a hat, eye protection, a mask, an apron, face respirators and/or dust mist filters. Also:

- Check your clothing for defects and holes before wearing it while handling chemicals.
- Do not smoke, eat, drink, apply cosmetics or use the restroom directly following or while you are using herbicides and pesticides.
- Do not use herbicides and pesticides when winds are stronger than 10 mph to avoid blowing the chemicals to unwanted areas or onto other workers.

Cleanup Procedures

- After application, rinse your tools and equipment three times. Then pour the rinse water into the pesticide container.
- During application, chemicals may settle on you and your clothing, and can be carried into your vehicle and your home. Immediately wash areas of your body that came in contact with the product, and shower promptly after completing cleanup and storage procedures.
- Assume that clothing used while working with pesticides and herbicides has been contaminated, so take the following precautions:

- Always remove contaminated gear prior to leaving the worksite.
- Place clothing in a plastic bag and wash it separately from your street clothes.
- Boots, gloves and goggles used at the application site also need to be cleaned prior to leaving the site and stored in a clean area.

Storage and Disposal

- Keep all chemicals in their original manufacturer's container.
- When chemicals are not in use, store them in designated areas only.
- Disposal requires special handling. Check the label and follow our safe handling procedures. If you don't know how to dispose of something safely, ask before you toss it! Improper handling is bad for the environment, and poses fire and health hazards.

Employee safety is Mosquito Joe's top priority, so we expect you to do your part when working with herbicides and pesticides.