

PSEP Fact Sheet: Proper and Safe Use of Pesticides by Homeowners and Laundering Pesticide- Contaminated Clothing

Jeff M. Edwards, *Pesticide
Applicator Training Coordinator*

Joe Hiller, *Former Assistant Director,
Agriculture and Natural Resources*

Mark Ferrell, *Former Extension
Pesticide Coordinator*

Andrea M. Lewis, *Former
Extension Publication Assistant*

Select the proper pesticide, if needed

- Identify the pest you wish to control. If you can't do it yourself, seek help from a professional, such as your county extension educator.
- Pesticides are one of many tools available for controlling pests. If you use a pesticide, check your information sources thoroughly before selecting the most appropriate chemical.
- The most important step in selecting any pesticide is to **read the entire label and the MSDS!** Read and understand the product label thoroughly before you purchase, mix, apply, store, or dispose of a pesticide.
- Buy only the amount of pesticide you need!

Prepare for safe pesticide use

Make sure the label of the pesticide you choose contains the following information that is specific to your pest problem:

- **the site** you need to use the pesticide in or on
- **the pest** you want to control
- **the equipment** you need to apply it with

Before opening a pesticide container, read the entire label - understand signal words and safety precautions, and know what to do in case of an accidental poisoning or pesticide emergency. If you don't understand the instructions, contact your county extension educator for help.

The label is the law – You are liable to read, understand, and follow all instructions on the label.

Make sure you have on hand or can get the kinds of application and personal protective equipment and clothing specified on the label. Put all personal protective equipment on before you open the pesticide container and begin to mix and apply the pesticide!

Open, mix, and dilute the pesticide outdoors or in a well-ventilated area.

Apply pesticides safely

Follow all use directions carefully! Use only the amount directed, at the time and under the conditions specified, and for the purpose(s) listed.

You may not purchase or use restricted use pesticides unless you are a certified applicator licensed by the Wyoming Department of Agriculture.



Department of Plant Sciences
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Always keep children and pets away from the areas where you mix or apply pesticides!

Never apply pesticides outdoors on windy or rainy days.

Never eat, drink, or smoke while using pesticides.

Remove all objects that might be damaged or contaminated by pesticides from the areas to be treated. Don't replace them or use the area until the waiting time specified on the label has elapsed.

When treating fruits and vegetables in gardens, observe the time-to-harvest, also known as the pre-harvest interval [PHI] waiting period on the label. This period varies with the pesticide used and the food plant treated.

Properly store and dispose of pesticides

Store pesticides and other dangerous household chemicals securely so children, pets, and others who might not understand the label will not be able to reach them. Do not store pesticides near wells or other sources of water!

Never put pesticides into food or drink containers. Never place pesticides in any container other than the original container or the application equipment.

Dispose of waste pesticides and pesticide containers according to the label and local and state laws. Never pour chemicals down the drain! Call or write your extension office for information on proper disposal.

Clean up!

If you spill a pesticide, clean it up immediately and according to the label directions. Clean it up; don't merely try to wash it away! Properly dispose of clean-up materials!

Shower and shampoo thoroughly after using pesticides.

Wash your contaminated clothing separately from the family laundry.

If you do not understand the label instructions, call or write your local extension office or weed and pest office for help.

Read and follow label directions!

Material adapted from: P.M. Horton, pesticide coordinator, Cooperative Extension Service, Clemson University. *How to Use Homeowner Pesticides Safely, Pesticide Information Program Information Sheet PIP-IS-20-89.*

Laundering Pesticide-Contaminated Clothing

Consider using disposable clothing (ie., Tyvek) thus reducing exposure via laundering. Read pesticide labels to check for any special instructions. Pesticide formulation has the greatest influence on how easily clothing will launder clean. The best option for reducing exposure to yourself and your family is choosing disposable PPE.

Applicators should start with new or very clean coveralls each application season. Do not wear contaminated clothing. Launder clothing after each use. For best results, clothing should be washed soon after being exposed to pesticides. The longer clothing is stored before washing, the more difficult it is to remove pesticides from it.

Empty pesticide granules from cuffs and pockets. Do this outdoors. If granules are left in the clothes, they will dissolve in the wash water and may not be completely removed from the clothing during the wash cycle.

If concentrated liquids are spilled on clothing, **discard the clothing.**

High levels of an undiluted emulsifiable concentrate can remain in clothing even after 10 washes.

Contaminated clothing should be stored and washed separately from other family clothing because residues can be transferred from contaminated clothing to other items. Those washing laundry should know which clothing has been worn to apply pesticides and should wear rubber gloves when handling highly contaminated clothing to prevent absorbing pesticide into the body through the hands.

Pre-rinse or pre-soak contaminated clothing and thoroughly wring or spin the water out before washing. Pre-rinsing is especially useful for removing wettable powder formulations.

Use the longest wash cycle with hot water and a full-rinse cycle. Hot water is more effective in removing pesticides than warm water. Cold water is much less effective. Hot water is defined as 140° F, warm as 120° F, and cold as 86° F or lower. Do not overload the washing machine. Use the appropriate water level.

Use the recommended amount of detergent. Most people do not use enough detergent. In hard water areas or when clothing is especially dirty, use more detergent. Liquid detergents are more effective than powdered detergents for removing oil-based pesticides. Neither bleach nor ammonia has been shown to contribute to pesticide removal.

Line drying in direct sunlight is recommended.

Run the washing machine through a cycle without any clothes to remove pesticide residues before washing other clothing.

When in doubt of condition of clothing, discard them.

Precautionary Statement

All pesticides have both benefits and risks. Benefits can be maximized and risks minimized by reading and following labeling. Pay close attention to directions for use and precautionary statements. The information on pesticide labels contains both instructions and limitations. Pesticide labels are legal documents, and it is a violation of both federal and state laws to use a pesticide inconsistently with its labeling. A pesticide applicator is legally responsible for the proper use of pesticides. Always read and follow labels.

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