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Personal Protective Equipment

An Important Message for Anyone Who Works with Pesticides

Protect yourself when applying pesticides – always use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment

What is Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

PPE is any clothing or equipment that is worn to minimize pesticide exposure and protect your health. PPE can be as simple as chemical-resistant gloves and footwear worn with a long-sleeved shirt and long pants; or may involve using a respirator and protective suit.

When should PPE be worn?

Wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is always required when handling commercial or restricted class products. Always read the precautions on the pesticide label before handling to determine the level of PPE required.

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

- Mixing, loading, and applying (for example, spraying);
- Handling, cleaning up, and repairing equipment that was used to apply a pesticide

What PPE do I need?

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. Labels include stickers, tags, seals, leaflets, brochures and/or wrappers applied to or attached to the product package. You are responsible for being aware of and following these instructions.

Health Canada determines the type of PPE to be worn based on extensive scientific review of a combination of the following 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 many years).



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Tips for PPE Use

- 1 Read the pesticide label. It contains all of the important information you need to know to ensure you are using the correct PPE;
- 2 Avoid touching 'clean' surfaces while wearing contaminated gloves (e.g., steering wheel, door handles, counter tops), or thoroughly clean these surfaces afterwards with water and detergent;
- 3 Never smoke, eat, drink or use the toilet after handling pesticides without first washing your hands;
- 4 Remove PPE in a pre-determined area separate from living or working areas;
- 5 Store used or contaminated PPE in a safe, secure area and out of reach of children and pets, until it can be properly cleaned;
- 6 After using pesticides, shower and change into clean clothes;
- 7 If pesticide gets inside PPE, remove clothing immediately, shower or wash thoroughly, and change into clean clothing.

Proper Care and Use of PPE

- Wash the outside of gloves before removing them;
- 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;
- Safely dispose of any contaminated PPE;
- Treat all clothing worn during pesticide use as contaminated, and handle with chemical-resistant gloves.

How to Launder PPE Clothing

- 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.

Always Use the Correct PPE

To ensure you are properly protected, always wear the appropriate PPE. Different types of PPE are designed for different situations, so always read the label to make sure you are properly protected.

Chemical-Resistant Gloves

- Different gloves provide protection from different chemicals, so read the label to see what type of gloves are recommended;
- If a glove material is not specified on the label, it is best to select a butyl, nitrile, or a barrier laminate glove;
- Waterproof, leather or fabric gloves are not necessarily chemical-resistant. Chemical-resistant materials prevent certain chemicals from passing through the gloves;
- Adjust gloves according to the task. When spraying overhead, gloves should be folded with a cuff or extended over long sleeves so that the pesticides cannot be funneled in the gloves.
Spraying downward requires long sleeves to extend over the gloves to prevent the pesticide from being channeled into the gloves;
- Ensure that you wash the outside of your gloves before removing.

Chemical-Resistant Footwear

- Always wear waterproof, unlined, neoprene or rubber boots while loading, mixing, or applying pesticides. Do not wear leather or fabric boots;
- Pant legs should be worn outside the boot to prevent pesticides from running into the boot;
- Wash your boots after each use.

Protective Eyewear

- Follow the directions on the label to ensure you are using the correct protective eyewear;
- Some products may require the use of goggles while for others, a protective face shield may be needed.

Help with Labels

In cases where the product label is damaged or unreadable, Health Canada provides some useful tools to help you find the information you need. These tools allow you to search for label information on a wide range of products.

Coveralls

- Pants and a long-sleeved shirt must be worn under long-sleeve coveralls. Coveralls must be closed at the neckline and wrists;
- Remove coveralls immediately if they become wet from pesticide;
- Read the label to ensure that you wear the appropriate coveralls for the pesticide. Some pesticides may contain solvents that require chemical resistant materials.

Protective Headwear

- Head protection should be worn when there is risk of pesticide exposure from splashing or drift;
- Baseball caps, fabric hats, and straw hats are not appropriate protective headwear. These will retain and absorb pesticides. Better protective headwear would be a wide-brimmed rubber rain hat.

Respirators

- Respirators must be worn if indicated on the label;
- Air-purifying respirators (APRs) remove contaminants in the air that you breathe by filtering out particles;
- Supplied-air respirators (SARs) supply clean air from a compressed tank or air line;
- Chemical cartridge respirators use a cartridge filter that contains absorbents to remove pesticides;
- Important! Perform a user seal check on the respirator before each use.

Health Canada Online Pesticide Label Search

Google “Health Canada Pesticide Label Search” to access Health Canada’s library of pesticide labels.



The screenshot shows the Health Canada website's search interface. At the top, there are navigation links for Français, Home, Contact Us, Help, Search, and canada.gc.ca. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Consumer Product Safety > Pesticides & Pest Management > Registrants & Applicants > Tools > Search Product Label. The main heading is "Search Product Label" under the "Consumer Product Safety" section. A disclaimer states: "This label transcript service is offered by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency to provide efficient searching for label information. This service and this information do not replace the official hard-copy label. The PMRA does not provide any guarantee or assurance that the information obtained through this service is accurate, current or correct, and is therefore not liable for any loss resulting, directly or indirectly, from reliance upon this service." It also mentions a new application for mobile devices. The search section is titled "Search product information" and includes a text input field for "Enter the text you wish to search for". Below this are sections for "Initial Criteria" and "Additional Criteria", each with a dropdown for "Search Field" and "Operator" (set to "contains").

Health Canada Label Search App

Health Canada has developed a label search app that is available on iOS, Google Play, and the Amazon App Store.



Remember, Always Treat Pesticides with Care

- Store pesticides according to label statements. For some agricultural pesticides, this could be in a locked, signed and ventilated area;
- Inform people nearby of areas treated with pesticides;
- Dispose of pesticide containers according to the label statement;
- Do not store pesticides in unlabeled 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.

For Additional Factsheets about the Safe Use of Pesticides, See:

Pesticide Gloves, Cat.: H114-31/1-2017E-PDF

Understanding Preharvest Intervals for Pesticides, Cat.: H114-31/3-2017E-PDF

Understanding Restricted-Entry Intervals for Pesticides, Cat.: H114-31/2-2017E-PDF

For more information or to provide feedback on this factsheet, contact the Health Canada Pest Management Information Service at 1-800-267-6315 or hc.pmra.info-arla@canada.ca.