

# Disposal of pesticide containers and surplus pesticide

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Order No. 39/79

These procedures have been prepared to ensure the safe disposal of unwanted surplus pesticide and containers.

Pesticides for the purpose of this policy include insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, vermin destroyers, molluscicides, growth regulators and nematocides. Most of these products are used in agriculture and allied industries although there are also many industrial uses of the products.

Unwanted containers and pesticides, carelessly disposed of, can become hazardous to the public and wildlife alike, and it is essential that the following procedures be followed to avoid the serious consequences which could result from their indiscriminate disposal.

Manufacturers, retailers and the users of pesticides all have a role to play in the safe disposal of these materials.

## 1.0 Unwanted or surplus pesticides:

1.1 Users should try to buy no more pesticide than they need. Unopened containers should be returned to the supplier, if possible, as soon as it is known they are not needed. The following season is too late.

In the case of opened containers containing more pesticide than is needed, dilute liquid pesticides to the recommended spraying strength and dispose of in a pit at least 500mm deep, the bottom of which should be covered with lime. Dry pesticides should be buried as they are.

Select the site for disposal in accordance with the recommendations set out in "4.0 Disposal Site Selection" below.

Do not incinerate surplus pesticide in open pits or farm incinerators.

1.2 Excess diluted pesticide should also be disposed of in the above manner. This applies

to wash or rinse water from spraying equipment at the end of spraying, excess diluted pesticides from a spraying job, used wash from a sheep or cattle dip or spray race sump. It is recommended that no more pesticide should be mixed than is immediately required.

1.3 Water used for washing out or rinsing spray equipment may be discharged on to ground, preferably cultivated, to allow rapid absorption.

## 2.0 Disposal of empty pesticide containers:

2.1 ALL PESTICIDE CONTAINERS SHOULD BE TRIPLE RINSED WITH WATER IMMEDIATELY WHEN EMPTYING AND THE RINSE ADDED TO THE SPRAY TANK. THIS USES ALL THE PESTICIDE.

2.2 Large drums may be returned to the original supplier provided that he will accept them. Otherwise they should be dealt with as below.

2.3 Empty containers, of any size, should not be re-used for any purpose.

2.4 Remove all caps and bungs, etc. Plastic and metal containers and drums should be pierced top, sides and bottom and then crushed. Glass containers should be crushed. A clearly marked container should be used to hold crushed containers until they can be disposed of properly.

2.5 Containers treated as in 2.4 may be disposed of in a municipal or private sanitary landfill type tip and covered with 500mm of soil.

2.6 Do not let used containers accumulate. Dispose of them frequently.

2.7 Shipping or outer containers for pesticides, other than herbicides, may be disposed of by burning if they are made of a combustible material. Other combustible packaging containers, except those used for herbicides, may be burned unless the label warns against burning.

Burning should not be carried out when wind will cause smoke to drift over dwellings, people, livestock, crops or the person carrying out the operation.

2.8 Do not incinerate metal containers.

### **3.0 Disposal of herbicide containers:**

3.1 Glass herbicide containers should be broken and crushed.

3.2 Metal herbicide containers should be handled as in 2.4.

3.3 Crushed containers for herbicides should be disposed of as in 2.5 above.

### **4.0 Selection of a disposal site:**

4.1 On-farm disposal.

The site selected should be remote from dwellings, crop areas, livestock, and be so situated to ensure that any residue which may result will not contaminate ground water or surface water.

The site area should not be used later for any other purpose and should be fenced off to prevent access by livestock.

The ground should be level to prevent surface runoff. The soil type should be sufficiently permeable to allow quantities of liquids to soak slowly into the soil.

4.2 General public.

Members of the public are encouraged to dispose of surplus pesticides on their own land in the manner as described in 1.0 Unwanted or surplus pesticides.

### **5.0 Small pesticide spills:**

5.1 Powdered formulations—Observe safety directions on the label and take necessary precautions. Then carefully collect all spilled pesticide, and any broken packages, in an openhead drum and seal for removal to disposal site (as in 4.0) and follow procedure in 1.0 Unwanted or surplus pesticides.

5.2 Liquid formulations—Observe safety directions on the label and take necessary precautions. Immediately form an earth or sand dam around the spill. Unless the label directs otherwise, dose spilled area with a 50:50 mixture of laundry bleach and water and then spread lime over the area and leave for at least one hour.

Absorb any excess liquid in soil or sand and shovel soil/lime mixture into openhead drums for disposal at a satisfactory site (see 4.0). Dose area again with the bleach/water solution and hose the area down.

5.3 Personal hygiene—Do not smoke, drink or eat during clean-up operation. Remove and wash all protective clothing and equipment. Immediately change contaminated clothing and launder promptly. Shower, using plenty of soap and water at completion of clean-up operation.

These procedures have been prepared by the Division of Agricultural Chemistry in conjunction with the Environment Protection Authority of Victoria, and have been approved by the Pesticides Review Committee.