



Pesticide Use in and Around the Home



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Pesticides are toxic. Because of this, people who use pesticides in and around the home must be familiar with safe handling and application procedures. When proper precautions are followed, registered pest control products can be used without posing a significant risk to health or the environment.

Regulation

Prior to importation, sale or use in Canada, all pesticides must be registered under the *Pest Control Products (PCP) Act and Regulations*, administered by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). The intent of the *PCP Act* is to determine the safety, merit and value of pest control products available on the Canadian market when used in accordance with label directions.

Before a product can be registered, the registrant must first submit an application including product specifications (detailing all the ingredients in the product), a registration form, and the results of scientific studies. These results must then be evaluated to assess product efficacy as well as the potential for adverse impact on human health and the natural environment.



General Safety Precautions

A homeowner must decide how much damage from pests can be tolerated before control is necessary. Users must follow all safety precautions described on product labels to protect their own health, the health of others, and the natural environment.

Before using a pesticide

➤ Before purchasing any pesticide product or hiring a pest control operator, check on possible alternatives that may be available to control the pest. Some pests may be controlled by using traps and physical barriers or by sealing cracks and crevices that may allow pests to enter the home.



Products such as pyrethrum, boric acid, diatomaceous earth, *Bacillus thuringiensis*, and insecticidal soaps have low toxicity to humans and may be effective alternatives.

➤ Purchase only DOMESTIC class products bearing a PCP registration number. Domestic class products provide consumers with relatively safe products which are packaged in sizes that are convenient for use in and around the home. The AGRICULTURAL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL or RESTRICTED class products are intended only for use by commercial or licensed applicators.

- If the kitchen area is to be treated, cover or remove food, dishes and utensils.
- Cover or remove aquariums.
- Post appropriate warning signs to notify neighbours so that children and pets may be kept away from the treated area.

When using a pesticide

- Carefully follow all label directions.
- When using a pesticide for the control of home garden pests, observe the pre-harvest interval for each crop involved before harvesting.
- People and pets should leave the area during the pesticide treatment.
- Wear protective clothing such as rubber gloves, long-sleeved shirts, aprons, coveralls, rubber boots and goggles as stated on the label. Keep sleeves outside gloves and pants outside boots to prevent the pesticide from getting inside gloves or boots.
- Never mix different pesticides unless specified on the label.
- Never use a pesticide indoors when it is intended for outdoor use.



- Use the correct dosage. A higher dosage may cause injury to plants, kill beneficial insects, and leave undesired residues on crops. A lower dosage may not control the pest at all.
- Never spray a pesticide outdoors if wind speed is more than 8 kph (5 mph) or if the air temperature is above 30°C.
- Do not smoke, drink or eat while applying pesticides. Do not rub your eyes or touch your mouth while working with pesticides.
- Do not apply pesticides to humans (except when specified on the label, e.g. personal insect repellents), their clothing or bedding.
- Do not treat pets with pesticides unless indicated on the product label.

After using a pesticide

- Do not permit humans or pets to touch treated surfaces until the pesticide has dried completely. Usually 4 to 6 hours will be sufficient.
- As with many natural and synthetic products, pesticides such as pyrethrum, diatomaceous earth, and powdered formulations may cause allergic reactions in some people. These individuals should stay out of the treated area for a period of 24 hours after application.
- Provide adequate ventilation. If possible, open all doors and windows for a few hours after application.
- Wash your hands and face with hot soapy water. Thoroughly clean clothing before re-using it. Wash potentially contaminated clothing separately from regular laundry.
- Wash all surfaces in direct contact with food such as counter tops, table tops, and stove tops, with hot soapy water.
- Residual odour from insecticides such as DURSIBAN® may be caused by trace amounts of sulphur-based compounds and solvent systems in the formulation. This odour is harmless, although somewhat unpleasant. The same situation occurs with residual odour from herbicides such as KILLEX®. The odour, similar to dead fish and comparable in composition, does not come from the herbicide components but from the amine salt produced during formulation.
- Many residual insecticides can be removed from an area simply by washing with soap and water.



Pregnant Women

Generally, pregnant women should avoid contact with pesticides. If this is not possible, pregnant women should follow the additional safety precaution of not re-entering the treated area for 24 hours after the pesticide has been applied.

Pregnant women may be more sensitive to the strong smell of formulants contained in the pesticide. The odour in itself is not harmful and should dissipate if adequate ventilation is allowed. This residual odour may be caused by trace amounts of sulphur-based compounds and solvent systems in the formulation. Many residual insecticides can be removed from an area simply by washing with soap and water.

Poisoning

- If pesticide poisoning is suspected, consult a physician immediately.
- Bring the pesticide container or the label to the hospital. This may help in quickly diagnosing and treating the patient.

Storage

- Check the label for specific storage requirements.
- Always store pesticides out of the reach of children and pets, and away from feed, food or water.
- Store pesticides under lock and key. This will avoid confusing pesticide containers with common household products.
- Pesticides should not be exposed to extreme heat, cold or humidity.
- Do not store pesticides for a long period of time.
- For more information on pesticide storage, consult your provincial pest control authority.



Disposal

The best solution to the problem of pesticide disposal is good planning. It is essential to purchase only the required quantity for a specific problem. Here are a few suggestions on how to dispose of domestic class products:

- Unused domestic class products may be wrapped in several layers of newspaper and disposed of in the household garbage.
- Never burn or pour pesticide products down the drain.
- Empty pesticide containers should not be re-used.
- Surplus unopened containers should be returned to the supplier.
- Contact your municipal officials to inquire about a collection site for household hazardous waste. Collection of hazardous waste may be available on a periodic basis in some municipalities.
- For the disposal of large quantities of domestic class products, or for the disposal of commercial and restricted products, consult provincial authorities, or contact a provincially registered hazardous waste disposal firm.



Remember

Before Purchasing a Pesticide Product

- Identify the pest correctly.
- Use physical control methods and alternatives to pesticides.
- Read the label directions and safety precautions before buying the product. The label must include the name of the pest to be controlled and the treatment location (e.g., indoor, outdoor, garden uses, pet treatment).
- Purchase only the quantity of product needed for the treatment.
- Alternatively, you may choose to hire a licensed pest control operator.

When Using a Pesticide

- Carefully read all label instructions and precautions before using pesticides.
- Do not drink, eat or smoke while applying pesticides.
- Persons and pets should vacate the area during treatment. Cover or remove aquaria.
- If kitchen area is to be treated, cover or remove food, dishes and utensils.

After Handling a Pesticide

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after handling any pesticide product.
- Do not permit persons or pets to contact treated surfaces until residue has dried completely.
- Provide adequate ventilation of treated areas after use.
- Wipe clean all surfaces that comes in direct contact with food, such as counters, tables and stovetops, including indoor and outdoor surfaces.
- Always store pesticides out of reach of children and pets and away from food and beverages.

In Case of Accidental Poisoning

- Call a poison control centre immediately and seek medical attention.
- Take the pesticide container or label with you to the emergency facility or physician.
- Follow first aid statements on the label.
- In case of accidental poisoning of pets seek veterinary attention immediately.



When Disposing of Pesticides

Do not reuse empty pesticide containers. Wrap and dispose of in household garbage.

Unused or partially used pesticide products should be disposed of at provincially or municipally designated household hazardous waste disposal sites.

Use Common Sense

- These are general recommendations.
- Consult the label for specific instructions.
- When in doubt, contact a professional.

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