Additional resources

OREGON POISON CENTER

For treatment information if you are exposed to pesticides and become ill or are concerned you might become ill. Call 800.222.1222.

NATIONAL PESTICIDE INFORMATION CENTER

For science based information on pesticides, why they might be used, what you can do to protect yourself, and what might happen if you are exposed. Call 800.858.7378 or email **npic@ace.orst.edu**.

PESTICIDE ANALYTICAL AND RESPONSE CENTER, OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

For reporting pesticide incidents impacting people, pets, or the environment. Call 503.986.4635 or email **pesticide-expert@oda.oregon.gov**.

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Pesticides Program
Oregon Department of Agriculture
635 Capitol St. NE, Salem, OR 97301
503.986.4635
pesticide-expert@oda.oregon.gov
https://oda.direct/AboutPesticides

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

It is advisable to promote the use of IPM methods for reducing pest levels as another way to minimize risk. IPM uses a combination of methods to reduce the level of pests. The steps listed below are some of the main concepts of IPM:

- Eliminate as many food, water, and shelter sources for pests as possible.
- Monitor for pests. Sticky traps help show where pests have been moving.
- Block as many entry points as possible.
- If pesticides are needed, use products with the lower toxicity levels, such as those with the signal word “Caution”.

Remember, applicators are responsible for fully reading, understanding, and following the pesticide label. This includes only applying a product to a site listed on the label, using the correct rate of application, and wearing the proper PPE. All applicators should be aware of what they are applying and the associated risks.

Steps to mitigate or reduce risk

Before the Application

- Read all the directions.
- Consider providing a copy of the label and image showing the treated area.
- Ask questions about specific concerns (including children, animals, garden plants).
- Remove food, kids’ toys or pet food and water bowls from the treated area.
- Move or cover other sensitive items such as fish tanks, caged pet birds, BBQ grills, garden plants, and shut off A/C units.
- Explain the labeled re-entry period.

During the Application

- Follow the directions.
- Wear the correct PPE and be prepared to answer questions.
- Be aware of people or pets that may have suddenly entered the treatment area, and suspend the application until bystanders are out of treatment area.
- Be aware of sensitive sites, pollinator (e.g. bees) activity, and avoid drift.

After the Application

- If warranted, you may consider posting information about the treatment area.
- Communicate what areas have been treated and consider providing a copy of the label.
- Communicate any important label information to your customer (e.g. re-entry times).
- Ensure any ventilation requirements stated on the label are met and encourage ventilation of indoor areas when returning to the area.
- Properly dispose of any remaining product, decontaminate equipment and PPE per label instructions and wash hands with soap and water.

Pesticide Risk Communication and Mitigation

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

‘Is it safe?’

A pesticide applicator may be asked this question by a customer or person passing by. “Safe” can mean different things to each person. A better way to frame the question is, “what are the risks associated with this product?” Communicating pesticide information to the public can be difficult and intimidating. This brochure addresses how to talk with members of the public about pesticide risks and how to find ways to reduce that risk.

What is risk?

Risks from pesticides depend on how poisonous or toxic the pesticide is, and how much and how long something like a pet or person, may be exposed to it. Low toxicity products can be high risk if there is long or repeated contact. Alternately, high toxicity products can be low risk if there is no, or minimal exposure.

Each pesticide label contains a “signal word” to show the level of toxicity of the product.

CAUTION = low toxicity

WARNING = moderate toxicity

DANGER = high toxicity

Pesticide labels also have detailed directions on the personal protective equipment (PPE) the applicator must wear, requirements to wash hands and equipment, and for entry into treated areas. Be prepared to discuss what PPE is required and why it is necessary, especially for occupational pesticide users.

Conversations about risk should involve:

- Respectfully listening and asking questions to better understand concerns.
  - » “What are your concerns about the application today?”
  - » “What would you like to know about the product?”
- Using simple and concise messages.
- Talking about the risk (low, moderate, high) instead of safety. Levels of acceptable pesticide risk can vary for a number of reasons.
  - » “No pesticide is 100% safe. They are designed to be toxic to something. So, there is always some level of risk related to their use.”
  - » It may be helpful to share the steps you are taking to reduce risk, such as:
    - Using as little as possible
    - Applying it in areas not frequented by people
    - Using a bait box
    - Treating before people typically access an area and allowing the pesticide time to dry.
- If using a product that is more toxic, explain why:
  - » “This product does have a higher toxicity. Earlier treatments with lower toxicity products were not able to stop the infestation. Despite this, your risk of exposure is very low due to where it is being used.”
- Discussion about the benefits of the treatment.
  - » “Despite the risk of exposure, rodent bait can help prevent the spread of diseases by rats.”
  - » “This treatment is helpful for preventing mosquitoes and ticks from being as widespread. By doing this, their ability to spread disease is reduced.”
- Problem solving to identify how risk can be reduced.
  - » “This product has a low toxicity, but by staying out of the area until it has dried, you can reduce your risk further.”
  - » “By taking these steps, you can lower your risk from the treatment.”