

Preventing and preparing for a pesticide spill before the spill occurs

Pesticide spills can harm your health, community, and environment. They can also be difficult and costly to clean up. You can best prevent pesticide spills by transporting, storing and handling pesticides properly.

Ask yourself these questions: Are my pesticides secure during transport? Do I drive appropriately for road conditions? Does my company vehicle have suitable shelving and lighting in the storage area? Is my vehicle vented properly? Do I have a good stable surface where I fill my sprayer? Is my application equipment in good working order and without faulty hoses or valves? (Always follow the label and laws and safety guidelines when storing pesticides. Mix, load and apply pesticides carefully to minimize the chance of spills.) Review pesticide labels regularly. Accidents can happen even when taking precautions. Therefore, be prepared to handle pesticide spills before they do occur.

Developing a spill plan:

1. Every company should have a spill contingency plan and every employee should be familiar with this. It will help guide you if there is a spill. The plan should explain:
 - How to prevent spills
 - Who to contact if there is a spill
 - How to contain the spill
 - How to clean up the spill
 - How often the plan will be updated.
2. Every employee should have spill cleanup kit(s) on their vehicle.
Keep a spill cleanup kit in a vehicle when transporting pesticides, in the pesticide storage area, and at the mixing and loading areas. A spill cleanup kit can be purchased from a distributor or can be made from easily obtainable items. A pesticide spill cleanup kit should at a minimum contain:
 - personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g. unlined gloves, rubber boots, a respirator, protective eyewear, disposable coveralls),
 - dry absorbent material such as sawdust, vermiculite, dry coarse clay, kitty litter, commercial absorbent, newspapers or paper towels,
 - broom and scoop or shovel to pick up the contaminated material,
 - a container with lid (i.e. gallon size pail or heavy duty garbage bag) to put the contaminated waste in. This container can also be used to store contents of the spill kit, prior to a spill
 - A list of emergency phone numbers
3. Emergency phone numbers should be posted by each office telephone and at the storage area and within each vehicle. Write the numbers large enough so they are easy to read. Include phone numbers for the Poison Control Center, Fire/Police/Ambulance (911)
4. Compile a list of pesticide manufacturer company emergency phone numbers. Pesticide labels have an emergency phone number(s) on them. Read your pesticide labels and record the EPA registration numbers, the company name, and the pesticide name. In an emergency it may take too long to find phone numbers on the labels or the labels may be damaged. Keep these phone numbers in the spill contingency plan and spill kits.
5. Ask your distributor for copies of the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for the pesticides you use. Keep these in a convenient location.
6. Regularly review [First Aid Procedures](#) for pesticides spilled onto skin or splashed into the eyes.
7. ALWAYS review pesticide label information before using a pesticide.