



RESPONSIBLE CHEMICAL USE



Learning how to manage and handle chemicals safely and responsibly not only ensures your personal protection, but also provides environmental protection for our precious natural resources, like water, soils, native plants and animals, marine and coastal environments.



Readily available protective clothing and equipment will provide maximum personal protection during chemical use

This fact sheet is part of a series designed to help you:

- increase your awareness of correct and responsible use of all chemical types
- gain the knowledge required to effectively control weeds, pest insects and diseases without damaging, contaminating or polluting our environment
- adopt best practice to minimise chemical use and maximise personal safety, and
- play a part in improving water quality and environmental health.

Staying Safe With Chemicals

Chemicals used to control pest plants, insects and fungi are designed to kill. Pests and weeds can be controlled with chemicals, without harming yourself or the environment, but care must be taken.

By following the correct procedures, and using protective clothing and the right equipment, it is possible to provide maximum protection to you, your family and the environment.

Never assume a chemical is 'safe'. If you are using a chemical you should also be prepared to accept responsibility for following all the directions on the label, including the safety precautions.

As with many things, being prepared is a key, as well as knowing what to do if accidental exposure to a chemical occurs.

Other fact sheets in this series

Accuracy and Effectiveness
Alternatives to Chemicals
Bait Station Safety
Best Time to Spray
Calibrating Spray Equipment
Understanding Product Labels #1
Understanding Product Labels #2
Using Glyphosate
Weeds Near Water

Before and After Steps

Before starting any spraying job, the first step should be putting on appropriate protective clothing. Then check that the spray equipment is clean and in good working order. These steps should be followed even when working with chemicals for short periods of time or on very small jobs.

Take particular care when working with concentrated chemical, but recognise that contact with spray mixture or inhaling spray drift during application can be just as dangerous.

After spraying and cleaning up your equipment, use soap and water to thoroughly wash all exposed skin including the neck and ears, then change into clean clothes.

Clothing used when working with chemicals should be changed daily and more frequently if it becomes damp with spray.

Protective Clothing for Chemical Users

The label of the chemical will indicate what protective equipment should be used when handling mixing and applying it. The list is likely to include most of the following:

- overalls
- PVC apron (for use during mixing)
- rubber (gum) or PVC boots
- chemical resistant (Nitri-solve) gloves
- washable or chemical resistant hat
- goggles or face shield (particularly during mixing)
- respirator, in good condition and fitted with appropriate filter cartridges.

All of these items are readily available, so make sure they are 'standard issue' in your shed or garage along with the correct chemical and the right equipment for the job.





Potential Poisoning

Chemical poisoning can occur through the skin, through the eyes, by inhalation or by swallowing. The groin and head areas are the most sensitive to exposure through the skin but the hands are the area of greatest exposure when working with chemicals.

Poisoning can be described as either acute or chronic.

Acute:

Usually occurs as the result of an accident such as a splash or accidental swallowing.

Chronic:

Can develop over a period of years as a result of repeated low-level exposure, is usually un-noticeable, and hence its danger.

In the event of accidental chemical poisoning, act quickly and do the following:

- Remove contaminated clothing immediately. Protective clothing should be washed separately from other garments.
- Wash contaminated skin with soap and water.
- If any chemical splashes into an eye, wash it immediately in running water for 15 minutes.
- Consult a doctor, making sure to take with you the product label which provides essential information about the chemical.



Keeping all chemicals in one location is a sensible idea



A lockable storage area will keep chemicals out of reach of children and pets

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When using chemicals more is not better!

If you are uncertain about any aspect of chemical use, please seek professional advice from the place of purchase or the manufacturer before proceeding.

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