

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Safety Tips: Cleaning Up
Pesticide Spills*

With the advent of pesticide technology over the past several years, it has resulted in extraordinary gains for the agriculture industry in production numbers as well as the quality of the products. However as much of a “Godsend” as they have been for the industry, they are extremely hazardous. With this fact in mind, we must treat them with the utmost care and respect.

Spills or leaks can cause several different types of reactions, none of them are good. They cause a fire, explosion, or a release of toxic chemicals into the air, our water supply or the soil. Obviously, any of these actions can be catastrophic. Any chemical or spill, regardless of the size or magnitude should be reported to your supervisor and never leave a spill or leak unattended.

Corrective Action to Take-

- Do not hesitate to call for help if you need it or have possible doubts.
- Check the area around the spill or leak to see if any of the workers need medical attention.
- Warn all employees in this area and have them to evacuate the area.
- If the spill is an outdoors one, be sure to evacuate the employees upwind from the spill to minimize their exposure.
- Check the MSDS or product label for the correct PPE, use as prescribed, not anything less. This is an imperative issue.
- Check the immediate area for other potential hazards such as flames, electric cords, or running equipment.

**** If you surmise that a fire or explosion is imminent, clear the area making sure that all employees clear out with you.**

We shall discuss the 3-Cs of pesticide mitigation below – Control – Contain – Clean up-

Control the Spill-

- Be sure that you are wearing the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Then stop the spill or leak!
- If the spill is from a container, tilt the container back up on its base.
- Place a busted or leaking container in a larger chemically resistant barrel.
- In some cases, you might be able to patch the leaking container or tank to reduce the amount of flow.

If a spray tank or other type of tank has burst or tipped over, you may not be able to right it, but consider a temporary containment of soil to help contain it.

Contain the Spill-

- Work as quickly and carefully to keep the spill from spreading.
- Build a dike with clay, soil, sod, or other material. Absorbent pads are best if you have them.

Be sure that all employees are familiar with the location of the absorbent materials and/or tools to move the material to the spill sight.

- Dry pesticide spills may blow around, if you’re outside. If this is the case, moisten the dry material with a little water to avoid the blow.
- Rope off the area and put up signs to avoid to isolate the area to avoid folks “nosing” around.

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Clean up the Spills-

- Certain types of materials are used for cleaning up a spill, depending upon the material that as spilled or leaked.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are normally filed with a copy in the office and a copy in the close proximity of the pesticide storage area. Check the MSDS for specific instructions for cleaning up the spill.
- In addition to the MSDS instructions, follow the other instructions below:
 - ~Soak up the spill material with absorbent materials such as pads (if available), soil, sand, sawdust or shredded papers.
 - ~Sweep up the absorbent materials and deposit in a heavy plastic container.
 - ~Use a plastic dust pan to pick up the contaminated material. A metal dust pan might ignite the flammable materials.
- Check with your supervisor for instructions on how to dispose of the contaminated materials.

WARNING – Do not use water to clean up a pesticide spill. It will spread and make it worse. If the MSDS or pesticide label says the pesticide is an oxidizer, refrain from using sawdust, shredded paper, or sweeping compounds. They could burst into flames.

Thoroughly Clean Yourself-

- Take off your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Dispose your leather shoes, jeans, or other porous materials that may have become saturated with the pesticide. Ask your supervisor for instructions for the proper disposal method.
- Use soap, and water to wash your hands, face, neck and forearms. Then take a shower.

PESTICIDE CLEAN-UP - DOs and DON'Ts

DO:

- ✓ **Call for help, if you need it, and warn other employees of the leak and evacuate the area.**
- ✓ **Always wear your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).**
- ✓ **Warn other employees of the spill or leak- isolate the area, especially if it is a large leak.**
- ✓ **Let your supervisor know if you cleaned up the spill or leak by yourself.**

DON'T:

- ✓ **Leave a spill unattended unless you're in immediate danger.**
- ✓ **Use water to clean up a spill.**
- ✓ **Attempt to mitigate a spill without referring to the MSDS or for the proper clean up procedures.**

**TAKE EXTRA CARE AROUND
PESTICIDES OR
YOU MAY END UP WITH AN
UNWANTED SHOWER!!

WORK TO BE SAFE –
BE SAFE SO YOU CAN WORK!!**