

Pesticides

Applying them safely

Key takeaways

- Along with required PPE, wear tall, waterproof boots, long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and gloves.
- Stretch and warm up muscles before lifting or carrying a backpack sprayer or handpump. Fill the tank to a level you can safely carry.
- Use caution when using an ATV or UTV; shifting liquids can cause a rollover. For more ATV or UTV safety information go to saif.com/agsafety.

For more information, see our pesticide safety document (saif.com/S1180).

A farmer loaded a back sprayer with glyphosate to spray weeds. As she hoisted the backpack on her back, the strap broke and the tank fell to the ground, breaking and splashing pesticide on her face.

While spraying pesticide using a UTV, the wind direction changed, resulting in pesticide drifting toward the driver. After 20 minutes of application, the employee reported sore throat, watery eyes, and dizziness.

Pesticides, when used safely according to label requirements, can be an effective pest management tool. To prevent stories like those above, take some time to review these best practices for handling and applying pesticides. This overview prepares work crews who will apply pesticides using a hand sprayer, backpack sprayer, ATV, or UTV.

Before using a pesticide, always review the label and safety data sheet (SDS) for each product. All chemical containers should be labeled, including secondary containers and spray tanks. Always wear the required personal protective equipment (PPE) listed on the label.

Many pesticides need to be diluted, mixed, and loaded into a spray tank. Mix and load pesticides in a safe, well-ventilated location.

Make sure the location isn't near a well or other sensitive water source and isn't accessible to children or animals.

Prevent drift by applying pesticides when there is very little or no wind. If you feel spray or smell pesticide, change your position to avoid drift. If it's too windy, stop work until it's less windy.

After applying pesticides, be sure to properly clean the tools used. Store chemicals, mixing tanks, and spray tanks in a secure location. To prevent cross-contamination, take off your shoes before entering your home, wash your hands thoroughly, and wash clothing worn while applying pesticides separately.



Take action (Complete one or more activities as a team)

- Review** the safety data sheets (SDS) of each product being applied. For each chemical, discuss how it should be stored, PPE requirements, and accidental exposure response.
- Inspect** spray equipment. Look for cracks, leaks, and worn straps. Vehicle-mounted tanks should always be secured.
- Share** property-specific hazards, such as ATV or UTV hazards, hornet or wasp hives, road safety, etc.

