

Pesticide safety

Controlling weeds and pests is an important part of property management and applying pesticides is a common way to do it. Whether you're applying pesticides by hand, on foot, or on an ATV, it's important to know the safety risks and create a plan to control them.

Use this checklist as a tool to put your plan into action. This addresses activities that fall outside of the Worker Protection Standard (WPS). For more information on WPS requirements, visit osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/3924.pdf. And see our pesticide safety talk document (saif.com/S1179).

Communication and labeling

Pesticides can be safe and effective pest management tools when you follow the product label instructions. Make sure all employees are trained on reading and following product labels.

- Include all pesticides in your written hazard communication program.
- Review the safety data sheet (SDS) before using.
- Label all containers properly, including secondary containers, to prevent improper use. Never use drinking bottles as secondary containers.
- Train employees on how to read and understand labels and safety data sheets.
- Tell affected employees what kinds of pesticides are being applied that day, where they will be applied, and if a product has a restricted entry interval (REI).

Mixing and loading

Before using, many pesticides must be diluted, mixed, and loaded into a spray tank. Environmental and safety risks are highest when the product is in its concentrated form.

- Follow label safety requirements and mix chemicals at the ratio recommended by the manufacturer.
- Wear label-specific personal protective equipment, including safety glasses or goggles and gloves.
- Mix and load pesticides in a safe, well-ventilated location. Keep them far away from wells or other water sources and out of reach of children and animals.
- Place hand and eye wash stations near the mix-and-load area.

Key points for applying pesticides

- Along with PPE required by the label, wear tall, waterproof boots, long pants, long shirts, and gloves.
- Check the weather for excessive heat, rain, or windy conditions that will impact application effectiveness and applicator safety.



- To prevent drift, apply pesticides when there is very little or no wind. If you smell the pesticide or feel the mist, stop right away and move up-wind of the spray or wait for better conditions.
- Label the tank with the product name, even if planning to use it in one place. OSHA will allow unlabeled product if it will be used all at one time. The best practice is to always label secondary containers, in case something comes up and product is left in the container.

Applying on foot

- Inspect the tank, hoses, and straps for any damage or defects before using.
- Warm up muscles before lifting or carrying spray tanks to avoid strains or sprains. Take breaks when needed.
- Plan your walking path to avoid product blowing on to you or walking through plants already treated.

Applying from an ATV or UTV

- Review vehicle-specific safety requirements before use, including load-carrying capacity.
- Always secure the spray tanks. Use small trailers to carry the spray tanks when you can.
- Check for terrain-specific hazards before applying pesticides; identify ditches, fences, tree limbs, and other hazards.

Key points after applying pesticides

- Clean pesticide residues from equipment or tools used in the mixing and spraying process.
- Store chemicals, mixing containers, and spray tanks in a secure area.
- Remove shoes before entering the home.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Wash clothing separately.

