

How to Clean Up a Pesticide Spill

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

- **Pesticide spills** should be **cleaned up right away**.
- Be sure to wear the proper **PPE** when cleaning up a **spill**.
- Do not use water to **clean up a pesticide spill**.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

Bring samples of the **spill** cleanup materials used in your operation to the training session.

Pesticide spills can be dangerous

- Pesticides are hazardous materials. A **spill** could result in a fire, an explosion, or the release of a toxic chemical into the water, soil or air.
- If you see a **chemical spill** – no matter how small – report it to a supervisor right away.
- Don't leave the **spill** unattended unless you believe you're in immediate danger.

Here's what you should do

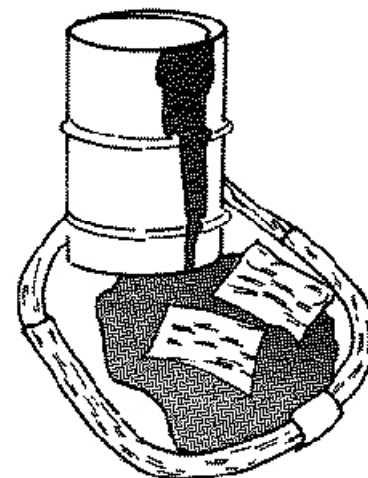
- Call for help if you think you will need it.
- See if any workers in the area need medical attention. Get them help if needed.
- Warn all other nearby workers, and have them leave the area. If the **spill** is outside, don't evacuate people to an area downwind from the **spill**.
- Put on **PPE**. Check the pesticide label for **personal protective equipment** requirements for handlers. You **must** wear at least that much **PPE**.
- Check for any immediate hazards such as **electrical cords**, flames, or running equipment.

Warning: If a fire or explosion seems imminent, leave the area immediately. Warn others as you go. Then call the local fire department.

Control the spill

- Be sure you're wearing **PPE**. Then stop the **spill**.
 - Turn off mixing or application equipment if it is leaking.
 - Turn a tipped container upright.
 - Place a broken or leaking container into a larger chemical resistant container.
- In some situations, you may be able to **patch** holes in a leaking tank to reduce the amount of flow.

Warning: If a spray tank or other heavy container has burst or tipped over, you will not be able to stop the source of the **spill**.



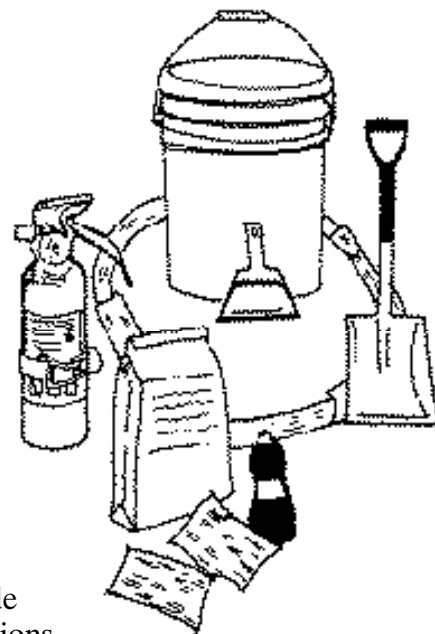
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See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

How to Clean Up a Pesticide Spill

Contain the spill

- Work quickly but carefully to keep the spill from spreading.
 - Surround the spill with absorbent pads, or build a dike around the edge of the spill, using soil, sod, clay or other materials. Here is where you can find the materials you need.
- Note to trainer: Tell trainees what materials you have and where they are located.*
- Dry pesticides that may blow around should be moistened slightly with water or covered with a tarp.
 - Rope off area and put signs up when you need to keep people out.



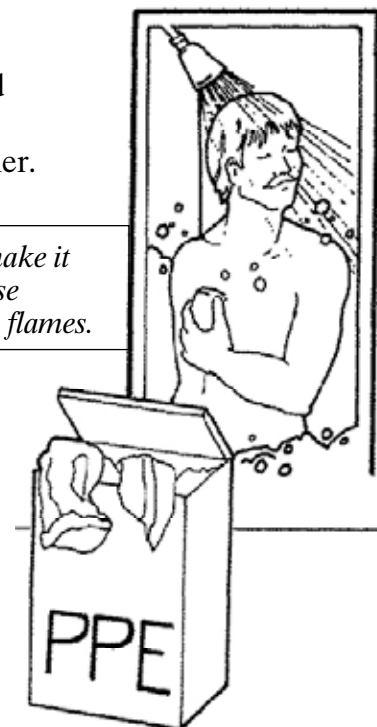
Clean up the spill

- We use certain materials for cleaning up pesticide spills.
- Note to trainer: Show trainees examples of your spill cleanup materials and tell them where they are kept.*
- We also keep material safety data sheets or MSDSs for each pesticide we use. Be sure to check the MSDS for specific spill cleanup instructions.
 - In addition to the MSDS instructions, follow these steps for a liquid pesticide spill:
 1. Soak up the spill with absorbent materials such as fine sand, sawdust, clay, cat litter, shredded newspaper or absorbent pads.
 2. Sweep the absorbent materials with the spilled pesticide into a heavy duty plastic container.
 3. Use a plastic dustpan to sweep up spills. Metal dustpans can spark and ignite flammable pesticides.
 - Dry pesticide spills should also be swept into a heavy duty plastic container.
 - See your supervisor for the proper disposal of contaminated materials.

Warning: Do not use water to clean up a pesticide spill. It will spread it and make it worse. If the MSDS or pesticide label says the pesticide is an oxidizer, don't use sawdust, shredded newspaper or sweeping compounds. They could burst into flames.

Thoroughly clean yourself

- Take off your PPE.
- Discard leather shoes, jeans or other porous materials that may have been saturated with the pesticide. Check with your supervisor for the proper disposal procedures.
- Use soap and water to wash your hands, face, neck and forearms. Then take a shower.



Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the Pesticide Spill Cleanup Do's and Don'ts.

PESTICIDE SPILL CLEANUP DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Always wear personal protective equipment.
- Let your supervisor know if you cleaned up a spill by yourself.

DON'T:

- Leave a spill unattended unless you're in immediate danger.
- Use water to clean up a pesticide spill.

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