

RISK/BENEFIT INFORMATION FOR PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS

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NOTICE: Please ask your applicator about special preparations you may need to make (yard, house, pool) prior to application, and other precautionary measures specific to the material applied.

Definition of a Pesticide

A pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended to control pest infestations. The word "pesticide" is an umbrella term for products which control a wide range of pests. Pests commonly found include weeds, insects, diseases, mites, and rodents. Pesticides designed to control these pests are called herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, miticides, and rodenticides. Another group of pesticides called plant growth regulators are used to manage the growth of plants in the landscape.

State and federal laws require the pesticides must be applied according to label directions. The label directs users as to how, where and at what rate the material must be applied. Upon request, your applicator will supply you with a label of material applied.

How Pesticides Work

Products intended for use on your property are applied as a liquid, dust, aerosol, granule, or bait and are generally active for a few minutes to a few months. Some compounds control pests on contact by damaging the physical structure of the pest. Other compounds become active only after they are absorbed or ingested, by interfering with physical development or preventing the pest from reproducing. The label on the pesticide contains specific information on how to control targeted pests. All pesticides must be applied in accordance with label directions.

Pesticides may be effective against a large class of organisms or specific to particular organisms. This means that many times, applicators can choose an effective pesticide or pest control strategy which will minimize any potential impact to humans and pets.

Why Pesticides are Used

Pesticides are a tool people use to protect crops, homes, animals, structures, or their landscape plants from pest damage. Examples are the protection of buildings from termites, turf from weed and insect damage, and indoor environments from invasions by insects and rodents. They also are used to control mosquito populations, disease vectors for public health concerns, protect food crops, and for weed control in lakes and ponds.

General Toxicity Information

Toxicity is a general term used to indicate the adverse effects produced by a pesticide. Understanding the potential health risks from pesticides requires knowledge of the exposure and the toxicity of the compound.

Exposure: Pesticides can enter the body by ingestion, inhalation, or absorption through the skin. Exposure occurs most frequently by absorption through the skin. One of the most effective ways to reduce risk is to reduce any potential exposure by restricting access to the treatment area.

There are two broad classifications of pesticides – general use and restricted use. These are EPA designations used to determine who may purchase and use the many kinds of pesticides available. General use pesticides are usually considered to have a lower toxicity or risk than restricted use pesticides, and have fewer restrictions regarding who may purchase or use the products. For example, all of the pesticide products that homeowners may purchase are general use pesticides. The majority of the materials that are routinely used on your property/yard are also general use pesticides.

Common Sense Precautionary Measure and Site Preparation

It is important to discuss site preparation and precautionary measures with the service technician. Additionally:

- DO NOT enter the treatment area until the time period stated/posted by the applicator has elapsed.
- The product applied may have a specific reentry or pre-harvest interval during which you may NOT enter the area or harvest the crop.
- For indoor applications – put away food, children's toys and clothing, cover fish tanks and turn off any pumps for fish tanks, and remove pets.
- For outdoor applications – put away children's toys and any clothing drying on the line, remove pets, cover or discard water for pets and in birdbaths, close windows, and make certain that applicators understand what areas, such as children's play areas, should not be treated.
- Additional precautionary measures may need to be taken to limit exposure for sensitive individuals such as: infants, small children, pregnant women, and senior citizens; persons on prescription medications; and person with respiratory (asthma) or other medical conditions.

Environmental Fate of Pesticides

Exposure to light, heat and other agents in the environment cause pesticides to deteriorate. The amount of time which it takes to break down the pesticide depends on the temperature, humidity, light, moisture conditions and other factors encountered in the environment. As a result, degradation times are highly variable depending on the compound and the environment in which it is applied. Generally, your applicator will select those pesticides that are the most effective and least persistent. Any areas on your property that may be of specific concern should be brought to the attention of the applicator.

If you observe any unusual reaction following a pesticide application, immediately wash with soap and water and consult a physician. It is important to provide the doctor with any information you may have concerning the pesticide used. Additional emergency information about the pesticide may be obtained by contacting the Poison Control Center at 1-800-632-2727 (616 area code), or 313-745-5711 (313, 517, or 906 area codes), or the National Pesticide Telecommunications Network at 1-800-858-7378.