

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Safety Tips:
Understanding Pesticide
Labels

Pesticide labels contain important information. This information will guide you in handling the various types of pesticides. You should always read the label each time you begin to use any type of pesticide. Obviously, if you don't understand some part of the label, ask for help.

What is a pesticide label?

- The government requires pesticide manufacturers to put labels on the containers of all the pesticides that we use.
- The label includes important information, such as how to apply, store and dispose of the pesticide and what to do in case of an emergency.
- If a label is missing or damaged, ask your supervisor or manager for a new one. Normally, there will be a location where you can obtain one to replace the damaged or missing one.
- If you have trouble understanding the information on the label, ask your supervisor or manager.

Why read a pesticide label?

- Carefully following directions on a pesticide label will help protect you from exposure to the chemical.
- Labels are constantly changing; that's why it is important to read the label of the product you are currently using.
- If you are using a pesticide with an old and new label, always follow the new label.
- If you are using two different pesticides in an application, follow the label with the strictest requirements.

When you should you read a pesticide label?

- Before you start to apply the pesticide.
- Before mixing the pesticide, if mixing is part of your job.
- Before storing or disposing of the pesticide or its container.

What Information is on a Pesticide Label?

No two pesticide labels are exactly alike. Don't let this fact confuse you. Following is some of the basic information common to most pesticide labels:

- ✓ **Name of the product-**
Here you will find a trade name or a chemical or "common" name.
- ✓ **Ingredients-**
The active ingredient is the one that affects the pest that you are trying to control. This is important information for a doctor to have in case of an emergency.
- ✓ **Manufacturer's Name and Address-**
This tells you who to contact if you need more information.
- ✓ **Signal Words and Symbols-**
The most dangerous pesticides say "Danger" or "Danger-Poison." The "Danger-Poison" pesticides also have a skull and crossbones symbol. Moderately toxic pesticides say "Warning." Low toxic pesticides say "Caution."
- ✓ **Statement of Practical Treatment-**
This gives you first aid instructions in case of exposure.
- ✓ **Precautionary Statements-**
This section tells you what hazards the pesticide may present. Most labels will tell you what *personal protective equipment* handlers and other applicators must wear.
- ✓ **Directions for Use-**
This section tells you how to apply the pesticide safely. Many labels also have an "Agricultural Use Requirements" box. Look here to learn how much time you must wait to safely re-enter an area after a pesticide has been applied. If some workers enter the area sooner, this section tells them what *personal protective equipment* to wear.
- ✓ **Storage and Disposal-**
This part of the label gives you the instructions for safe storage and disposal.

DOs & DON'Ts for Pesticide Labels

Do:

- ~ Closely follow the instructions on the pesticide label.
- ~ Read the label each time before you get ready to apply a pesticide.
- ~ Look at the label for the safe to re-enter time for the pesticide you applied.

Don't:

- ~ Ever use an unmarked pesticide that is in an unmarked container.
- ~ Forget to wear the personal protective equipment specified on the label.
- ~ Hesitate to ask for help if you don't understand the label.

**PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IS
YOUR SELF-DEFENSE
<><> USE IT!!! <><>
SAFETY NEVER TAKES A HOLIDAY**