

ON-FARM PESTICIDE STORAGE AND DISPOSAL ASSISTANCE



Tips on Working Safely with Pesticides in North Carolina



Storing pesticides correctly is critical for **(1) protecting human health**, **(2) preserving the environment**, and **(3) maintaining chemical effectiveness**. Make every effort to limit storage needs by purchasing only the amount of pesticide that you need for a specific job or for the current growing season. This fact sheet has information on North Carolina laws for storage of pesticides on the farm, guidelines for proper storage, and how to get help with the disposal of unwanted pesticides.

It's The Law

The following North Carolina pesticide rules apply to farm, household, and commercial storage of both general-use and restricted-use pesticides (RUPs). Additional requirements for commercial storage of RUPs are not covered in this publication. **For further information on storage regulations, contact the NCDA&CS, Pesticide Section (919-733-3556).**

1. Store pesticides to prevent leaking and to make them accessible for inspection.
2. Do not store pesticides in unlabeled containers (**see box at left**).
3. Do not store pesticides in any food, feed, drink, or medicine container.
4. Do not store pesticides in a way that could cause the contamination of foods, feeds, drinks, eating utensils, tobacco, other pesticides, seeds, or fertilizers.
5. Store pesticides in accordance with the pesticide labeling, taking into consideration the labeling on all other products in the same storage area.
6. Lock storage areas to prevent unauthorized access.
7. Store pesticides in an area that is dry (does not become damp or wet) and that has passive or mechanical ventilation.
8. Do not store pesticides with petroleum products or other flammable materials. Storage areas must be separated from other operations such as welding or burning. Appropriate care must be taken to minimize fire hazard potential when providing supplemental heating to storage areas.

Safe Storage Practices

Separation. The label will tell if a product should be stored separately to prevent interaction with other materials. Store volatile herbicides, especially some types of 2,4-D, separately from other chemicals. Store dry formulations on the highest shelves. Store liquids and glass containers on the lowest level. Keep all containers off the floor.

Clean Water. Each storage site should have an immediate supply of clean water. If running water is not practical, use a large sealable container with clean water. Changing the water at least once a week will ensure that it remains safe for use on skin and eyes. Keep an eye-wash dispenser immediately available for emergencies.

Inventory and Container Management. Keep an up-to-date written inventory of all stored pesticides and save a copy in a place away from the storage area. The inventory will be very useful in a fire or flood emergency, in settling insurance claims, and in estimating future pesticide needs. Try to purchase pesticides in containers that can be returned. Write the date of purchase on all containers and use older pesticides first. Do not leave any pesticide container in full sun or next to a heater.

(over)

All containers must show AT LEAST this information:

1. Common chemical name of pesticide;
2. Percentage of each active ingredient;
3. EPA registration number;
4. Signal word (Caution, Warning, or Danger);
5. Use classification (restricted use or general use).



STORAGE GUIDELINES

Always follow the product label for specific storage requirements. If the label gets fragile or hard to read, you may get a new one from a pesticide dealer, manufacturer, or the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (919-733-3556). The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) will provide additional storage information. MSDS can be obtained online at <http://ipm.ncsu.edu/pesticides/>, click on Product Labels and MSDS.

Storage Building Features

Location: Check on local building and fire codes and environmental regulations when choosing a storage site. North Carolina law requires pesticide storage areas to be located at least 100 feet from a well. Locate the building in an area that will not flood.

Construction: It is best to store pesticides in a building designated specifically for pesticide needs. The floor should be sealed concrete or another non-porous material to make cleanup easier and keep any spilled pesticides from seeping into the ground. Construct the floor with a continuous 2- to 4-inch lip or curb to contain spills. Seal any floor drains unless they are plumbed to an outside containment basin. Store pesticides on metal shelves with a lip or wood shelves covered with plastic or chemically-resistant paint. The storage area should be bright enough to allow easy reading of pesticide labels. If possible, provide electrical power to the storage area for lighting, exhaust fan, and heat (if needed). Use explosion-proof wiring and switches.

Warning signs, such as “Danger Pesticides-Keep Out -No Smoking”, should be placed at all storage entries.

Ventilation. The storage building needs constant ventilation to prevent the buildup of toxic fumes and to reduce humidity. Install louvered vents in both high and low areas of the storage facility to provide a continuous flow of air. An exhaust fan will remove fumes, excess heat, and humidity better than passive airflow.

Temperature. The storage building should be insulated or temperature-controlled. Freezing and overheating can ruin certain pesticides and may cause containers to leak or explode. Most pesticides should be stored at temperatures above 40° F and below 90° F. Read the label.

Emergency Planning

1. Be sure that the local fire department knows where your pesticide storage area is, and, if you store more than a few pounds of pesticides, give local authorities a copy of your inventory. Ask your county emergency management staff what information they require. **A pre-fire plan is available at: <http://www.croplifeamerica.org/public/pubs/prefire.pdf>**, or call NCDA&CS (919-733-3556) for assistance. Keep a fire extinguisher that is approved for chemical fires nearby, but not in the storage building itself.
2. Any spills should be cleaned up immediately. Keep on hand spill clean-up materials such as non-chlorinated cat litter, sand, sawdust or other absorptive materials, a shovel, and a drum with a lid for storing contaminated material.
3. Keep protective clothing and equipment nearby. If it is placed in the storage area, keep it protected from dust or vapor contamination.

Damaged Containers. If you see a damaged or leaking container, you may use the pesticide immediately for uses specified on the label or use one of the procedures listed below. (Wear appropriate protective clothing and equipment.)

1. Transfer the pesticide into another container that originally held the same pesticide and that still has its label.
2. Transfer the pesticide to a sturdy container that can be tightly closed. If possible, transfer the label from the damaged container to the new one or make a temporary label (see minimum label requirements front) until you can get a new one. Never use a food, feed, or drink container.
3. Place the damaged container and its contents into a larger liquid-proof container. Make a temporary label until you can use the pesticide or dispose of it properly.

Disposal Assistance

It is illegal to dispose of pesticides in sanitary landfills. You may be able to return unused pesticides in their original, unopened containers to the dealer. The NCDA&CS Pesticide Disposal Assistance Program collects banned, out-dated, or unwanted pesticides on special Collection Days at various sites. For more information, call 919-733-7366, your local Cooperative Extension Service Center, or visit the following web site: <http://www.ncagr.com/fooddrug/PDAP.htm>

The information in this document is for educational purposes only. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use conforms to the product label and complies with current regulations.

Technical Reviewer: Wayne Buhler, Ph.D., College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NC State University