



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

January 23, 2012



## How to Clean Up Pesticide Spills



The way time is getting away from us now, it won't be long until planting time. Planting time brings on spraying the crops with varying types of chemicals, depending on the commodity and whatever the problem might be. We all know that there are certain precautions that we need to adhere to in order to protect the environment and ourselves.

If we take the proper precautions with the various pesticides, we can insure the safety of all involved. On the other hand, if we don't, then we jeopardize the safety of whomever and whatever may be involved. Herein is the subject of this week's newsletter – Cleaning up chemical spills. Hopefully, there won't be many to clean up, but if there are then the following information, hopefully, can help in mitigating the problem.

### THE DANGERS OF PESTICIDE SPILLS-

- Pesticides are hazardous materials. A spill can cause a fire, an explosion, a release of toxic materials into the waters, soil or air.
- Spills of any magnitude should be reported to your supervisor.
- Any spill or leak should not be left unattended, unless you judge that you might be in immediate danger.

### ACTIONS TO TAKE IN CASE OF A SPILL-

- ✓ If the spill is more than you can handle, call for help.
- ✓ Check the area to see if any other workers need help or medical attention and get them help as needed.
- ✓ Warn other people in the area so that they can leave the area. If it happens to be an outside spill, be sure to keep the employees and others upwind from the spill.
- ✓ Put on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Check the pesticide label to find out what type of PPE is required.

You should wear at least the type and amount listed on the pesticide label.

Check for other potential hazards in the area such as downed power lines, flames, or running equipment. *(If a fire or explosion is imminent, warn others around you and leave the area immediately. Call the local fire department.)*

### CONTROL & CONTAIN THE SPILL-

- Be sure to wear the proper PPE and secondly, stop the spill.

- ~Turn off mixing or application equipment if it is leaking.
- ~Turn a tipped-over container upright.
- ~Place the broken container or leaking one into a larger chemical-resistant container.
- ~It may be possible to patch a leak in some cases to stop a leak.

- Work quickly and carefully to keep the spill from spreading.
- Surround the spill with absorbent pads, or build a dike around the spill with soil, sod, clay, "oil-dri," or other available materials to contain the spread.
- If the spill or leak happens to be dry pesticides or other dry chemical materials, it will help to moisten the material with water to eliminate the chance of it blowing with the wind.

### CLEAN UP THE SPILL-

- As noted above, keep a reasonable supply of "oil-dri" and other types of materials for pesticide cleanup.
- Two copies of MSDS should be available – one copy in the administration office and the other in close proximity of the storage facility for use as reference for specific instructions on factors of the chemical including proper PPE, etc.
- For liquid pesticides, an ample supply of cat litter (oil-dri), sand, clay, shredded newspapers, or absorbent pads should be kept accessible for cleanup.
- Sweep up the absorbent materials in an adequate plastic container. Use a plastic dustpan, as a metal can cause sparks that could ignite the materials.

### TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF-

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

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Excerpts: Gempler's Tailgate Training  
12/20/2011