



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

January 4, 2015



## Safety Tips: Cleaning Up Pesticide Spills



Pesticides are a hazardous material and we should treat them as such. A spill can cause several different reactions, none of them are good. Results range from a fire, explosion and a release of toxic chemical into the water supply, air or soil. Any of these could prove to be catastrophic. Any chemical spill, regardless of how minute it is, should be reported to supervision as quickly as it is discovered. We should never leave a spill or a leak unattended.

### Corrective Action to Take-

- ✓ Call for help if you think you need it.
- ✓ Check the area around the spill to see if any workers need medical attention.
- ✓ Warn all workers in the surrounding area and have them to leave the area.
- ✓ If it is an outside spill, be sure to evacuate the employees upwind from the spill to minimize their exposure,
- ✓ Check the pesticide label, put on the proper corrective PPE and equipment required for handlers. You must wear at least the articles that the MSDS requires. More would be acceptable, but less won't be.
- ✓ Check the immediate area for potential hazards, such electrical cords, flames or running equipment.

*If you surmise that a fire or explosion is imminent, leave the area and make sure that other employees leave also. When you have cleared the area, call the fire department.*

### Control the Spill-

- ✓ Be sure you are wearing the PPE. Then stop the spill.  
~Turn off the 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.
- ✓ If some cases, you might be able to patch holes in a leaking tank to reduce the amount of the flow.

*If a spray tank or other type of tank has burst or tipped over, you won't be able to stop the source of the spill.*

### Contain the Spill-

- ✓ Work quickly and carefully to keep the spill from spreading.
- ✓ Build a dike around the spill with clay, clean soil, sod or another type of material. Absorbent pads should be used if you have them.

*(Be sure that the employees are familiar with what materials you have and where they are located, in case they are needed).*

- ✓ Dry pesticides spills may blow around, if you are outside, so you may want to moisten the dry spill with a little water to avoid the blow.
- ✓ Rope off the area and put up signs to isolate the area from people "nosing around."

### Clean Up the Spill-

- ✓ Certain types of materials are used for cleaning up a spill, depending upon the material.
- ✓ Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are filed, usually 1 copy in the office and another in the close proximity of the pesticide storage facility. Check the MSDS to determine the specific instructions for cleaning up the spill.
- ✓ In addition to the MSDS instructions, follow the other instructions listed below:
  - ~Soak up the spilled material with absorbent materials such as sand, sawdust, clay, cat litter, shredded newspapers or absorbent pads.
  - ~Sweep the absorbent materials with the spilled pesticide into a heavy plastic container.
  - ~Use a plastic dustpan to sweep up the pesticide materials. A metal dustpan can spark and ignite flammable materials.
- ✓ Dry pesticide spills should also be swept into a heavy duty plastic container.
- ✓ Check with your supervisor to find out the proper way to dispose of contaminated materials.

**WARNING: Do not use water to clean up a pesticide spill. It will spread and make it worse. If the MSDS or pesticide label says the pesticide is an oxidizer, refrain from using sawdust, shredded paper or sweeping compounds. They could burst into flames.**

### Thoroughly Clean Yourself –

- ✓ Take off your PPE.
- ✓ Dispose your leather shoes, jeans or other porous materials that may have become saturated with the pesticide. Check with your supervisor to find out the proper disposal methods.
- ✓ Use soap and water to wash your face, hands, neck, and forearms. Then take a shower.

### **DO:**

- Always wear Personal Protective Equipment.
- Warn other employees of the spill, clear and isolate the area, especially if it is a large spill.
- Let your supervisor know if you cleaned up a pesticide spill by yourself.

### **DON'T:**

- Leave a spill unattended unless you're in immediate danger.
- Use water to clean up a spill.
- Attempt to mitigate a spill without referring to the MSDS for the proper clean up procedures.

**IF YOU FIGGET WITH SAFETY  
YOU COULD LOSE A DIGIT!**

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**SAFE TODAY <><> ALIVE TOMORROW**