

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF PESTICIDES



HOW TO MINIMISE THE ENTRY OF PESTICIDES TO WATER



BEFORE SPRAYING

- Before spraying identify areas of special environmental risk (e.g. ponds, hedgerows, drinking water abstraction points and specially designated areas).
- Ensure the operator is fully aware of the environmental risk areas and what to do to protect them.

POTENTIAL ROUTES TO WATER EXPOSURE

Emissions of pesticides to water can come from diffuse routes or point sources (e.g. runoff from farmyards). Diffuse routes of entry include spray drift on the day of application, and/or runoff/drainage in the post-application period, especially if heavy rainfall occurs.

General advice for users to minimise point-source pesticide emissions (typical entry routes: mixing, filling, washing, spillage, leaks)

- Follow the label instructions.
- Be aware of the location of water bodies including the location of drinking water abstraction points.
- Carry out all handling operations well away from water bodies and drains (10-50 m). Do not fill spray tanks directly from water bodies.
- Take great care to avoid spills. Consider using a containment system to catch spills (e.g. a bund or lip around filling area).
- Minimise water volumes (rain and washings) on handling area. Consider using a covered handling area, if available and suitable.
- Best practice for washings of sprayer tanks and exterior surfaces is to carry this out in the field.
- Sprayer washings should be discharged onto the previously sprayed cropped area. Do not exceed maximum allowed dose for that area.
- Maintain application equipment in good working order.

General advice for users to minimise diffuse pesticide emissions (typical entry routes: spray drift, drainage, runoff, leaching)

- Follow the label instructions (Comply with any requirements specified for buffer zones.)
- Be aware of the location of water bodies, including the location of drinking water abstraction points.
- Do not apply pesticides if heavy rain is forecast within 48 hours.
- Do not apply to saturated or frozen ground.

- Avoid applications to soils that are prone to water logging.
- Do not apply if field drains are flowing.
- Do not apply on areas with channels that drain directly to water.
- Do not apply to dry, cracked soils.
- Do not apply on poorly drained or wet soils that slope strongly towards a water body.
- Consider maintaining a grassed buffer strip to protect vulnerable water bodies, in particular drinking water abstraction points.
- Ensure application equipment is properly calibrated.
- Do not spray in windy conditions.
- Keep the spray boom as low as possible.
- Use the coarsest appropriate spray quality.
- Consider use of drift-reducing nozzles.
- Consider lower application rates, different application timings, alternative treatments etc.

FURTHER INFORMATION

PRODUCT LABELS

The labels and information supplied with plant protection products often specify measures to reduce aquatic exposure, e.g. buffer zones. If a buffer zone is specified on the label of a plant protection product, it must be complied with. An aquatic buffer zone is an untreated strip of a specified minimum width between the edge of a water feature, such as a ditch, stream, pond, river or lake and the edge of the treated area adjacent to the water body.

MINIMISING POINT SOURCE INPUTS

Detailed information on measures to minimise point source inputs of pesticides is available from an EU project called TOPPS (Training the Operators to prevent Pollution from Point Sources). The address of the TOPPS website is as follows – <http://www.topps-life.org>

MINIMISING DIFFUSE SOURCE INPUTS

Detailed information on measures to minimise diffuse inputs of pesticides is available from the UK Voluntary Initiative – a campaign that promotes responsible pesticide use. The address of the Voluntary Initiative website is as follows – www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk

DISPOSING OF EMPTY PESTICIDE CONTAINERS

Guidance on how to manage empty pesticide containers is provided in the Environmental Protection Agency - Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine publication - *Good Practice Guide for Empty Pesticide Containers*. Available for download at <http://www.epa.ie/downloads/advice/waste/farm/>

Good Practice Guide for Empty Pesticide Containers

- Step 1 – Triple rinse empty plant protection product containers after use and wash container caps and threads.
- Step 2 – Inspect and fully drain the triple rinsed containers.
- Step 3 – Puncture empty PPP containers.
- Step 4 – Purchase Farm Plastic Recycling Ltd. bags from your local Co-op or agri-merchant.
- Step 5 – Place the triple rinsed, clean and punctured PPP containers and washed caps in the recycling bags.
- Step 6 – Store bags in a safe dry place while filling.
- Step 7 – Bring filled recycling bags to your local authorised bring centre. The location and dates of the bring centres are available on the Farm Plastics Recycling website: www.farmplastics.ie

STORAGE AND HANDLING OF PESTICIDES

Information on the storage and handling of pesticides is provided in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine publication entitled *Storing and Using Plant Protection and Biocidal Products*. www.sligococo.ie/environment

CROSS COMPLIANCE AND PESTICIDES

The Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine publication entitled *Pesticides and Cross Compliance* provides guidance for farmers on what to expect during a cross compliance inspection in terms of pesticides. It also provides general information on the correct use and storage of pesticides. www.sligococo.ie/environment
