

Disposal of Pesticide Containers

Pesticide Information Leaflet No. 13

Amy E. Brown, Ph.D.

Coordinator, Pesticide Education and Assessment Programs

Robert Lindgren, Entomology Assistant

Revised January 1999

Pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, etc.) are designed to be toxic. Even in very small quantities, some can have a substantial adverse impact on sensitive organisms. Improper disposal of pesticides or their containers can lead to environmental contamination and may incur both civil and criminal penalties. There is usually no safe and legal way to dispose of leftover pesticide; all of the chemical must be used up on registered sites or crops according to directions on the label. Even when empty, small residues cling to the sides of the container; therefore, no pesticide container should ever be reused for any other purpose. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has accepted certain procedures, outlined below, which are designed to remove as much residue from the container as possible. Only after following these procedures may pesticide containers be deposited in a licensed sanitary landfill. Usually, the only way to dispose of pesticide containers not properly treated is to contract with a firm that handles hazardous waste -- a very expensive alternative!

Containers of Liquid Formulations

1. Triple rinse the container immediately after emptying it into the spray tank:
 - Ⓒ Fill the container 1/4 full with the proper diluent (usually water or oil).
 - Ⓒ Replace the closure or plug the opening if the container.
 - Ⓒ Rotate the container.
 - Ⓒ Add the rinsate to the spray tank.
 - Ⓒ Repeat this procedure 2 more times.
2. Puncture the top and bottom of the container to prevent its reuse.
3. Deposit the empty container in a licensed sanitary landfill.

Containers of Dry Formulations

1. Empty the contents into the tank, shaking the container to remove as much residue as possible. Take care not to inhale any dust.
2. Open both ends of the container to help remove residue and to prevent reuse.
3. Deposit the empty container in a licensed sanitary landfill.

Containers of Aerosol Formulations

1. Spray out as much as possible on the proper site, relieving the pressure. Do *not* puncture the container.
2. Deposit the empty container in a licensed sanitary landfill.