

Pesticide Use Warning

Pesticides Must be Used in Accordance with Label Directions

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 2 is warning applicators and consumers to use pesticides only in accordance with their label. Products claiming to prevent, destroy, or repel pests, including bacteria and viruses, are considered pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Congress enacted FIFRA to prohibit the sale, distribution, or use of a pesticide unless it is registered by the EPA. During the registration process, EPA reviews the product toxicity and its potential adverse effects (two key factors in determining whether the pesticide can be registered) and establishes any required safeguards for the use and management of the pesticide. EPA also approves the pesticide's label, which must give detailed instructions for its safe use.

Pesticides are classified according to their hazard potential to humans, animals, and the environment. The words "DANGER," "WARNING," or "CAUTION" are assigned to each pesticide. There are two categories of pesticides: general use and restricted use. Many of the very hazardous pesticides are classified as a **RESTRICTED USE PESTICIDE** by the EPA because of their potential to harm people and the environment. A pesticide, or some of its uses, is classified as restricted if it poses heightened risk to people (pesticide handlers or other persons) or the environment. EPA maintains a Restricted Use Products Report, which lists active and cancelled restricted use pesticides at <http://www.epa.gov/opprd001/rup/>.

Only a licensed pesticides dealer can sell Restricted Use Pesticides, and only certified pesticide applicators or personnel under the direct supervision of a certified applicator can purchase and use Restricted Use Pesticides. Pesticide labels tell the applicator how to use and store the pesticide properly and safely, the conditions under which it may be applied, the allowed uses, and any required monitoring or safety precautions that need to be employed as well as first aid procedures in the event of exposure. Pesticide product labels provide critical information about how to safely handle and use pesticide products (for more information on pesticide product labels see <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/regulating/labels/product-labels.htm>). The label on the Restricted Use Pesticide category of pesticides bears the words "RESTRICTED USE PESTICIDE." Before choosing, using, or storing a pesticide, the applicator needs to read and follow the directions on the label. Labels may be found in the USEPA Pesticide Product Label System at <http://iaspub.epa.gov/apex/pesticides/f?p=PPLS:1>.

Violations of the federal law, FIFRA, can result in civil or criminal penalties being imposed on the violator.

Some pesticides are applied through fumigation. Fumigation is a method of pest control that completely fills an area with gaseous pesticides, or fumigants, to suffocate or poison the pests within. It is used to control pests in buildings and containers (structural fumigation), soil, grain, and produce, and is used during processing of goods to be imported or exported to prevent transfer of exotic organisms. This method also affects the structure itself, affecting pests that inhabit the physical structure, such as woodborers and drywood termites.

Fumigation generally involves the following phases: First the area intended to be fumigated is completely sealed off; next the fumigant is released into the enclosed space to be fumigated; then, the space is kept sealed for a set period while the fumigant gas percolates through the space and acts on and kills any infestation in the product, next the space is ventilated so that the poisonous gases are allowed to escape from the space, and the area becomes safe again for humans to re-enter. If successful, the fumigated area is now safe and pest free. Product labels will include critical information regarding the posting of warning signs to protect the public, the use of personal protective equipment for pesticide handlers, the proper ventilation of the area post-application, and any other required steps.

Questions about the proper use of pesticides can be directed to the National Pesticide Information Center at 1-800-858-7378 or npic@ace.orst.edu.

**EPA Responds to Incident that Leaves Four People Ill on St. John
EPA Working with U.S. Virgin Islands Government on Ongoing
Investigation**

The EPA is working closely with the U.S. Virgin Islands government to investigate an incident reported to the U.S. Virgin Islands government and EPA on March 20, 2015. Paramedics responded to a call that a family of four staying in Cruz Bay, St. John became very ill. Family members were subsequently hospitalized. The EPA is looking into whether the family was made ill by a pesticide called methyl bromide, which may have been used to fumigate a room at the resort on March 18, 2015. The use of methyl bromide in the U.S. is restricted due to its acute toxicity. Only certified applicators are allowed to use it and it is not authorized for residential use. Health effects of acute exposure to methyl bromide are serious and include central nervous system and respiratory system damage. The EPA is continuing to work with the U.S. Virgin Islands government and others to gather information and will ensure that appropriate steps are taken if it determines any environmental regulations or laws were violated.