Pesticides – Landscaping Meeting Kit



WHAT'S AT STAKE

Although handling of pesticides is not covered under WHMIS because it is covered by other legislation, employers are still responsible for making available material safety data sheets (MSDSs) – or an equivalent – for each pesticide used in the workplace.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Exposure to pesticides can cause health problems ranging from skin irritation to long-term health problems or even death.

Common hazards of pesticide exposure include:

- Absorption of the pesticide through the skin, eyes, lungs, or stomach
- Irritation of the skin or eyes
- Injury to eyes, lungs, skin, or body organs

Incident example

- A worker suffered mild pesticide poisoning while using a backpack herbicide applicator. A faulty hose coupling allowed some of the herbicide to drip down his back and bare legs. He was not wearing protective clothing.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Initial Pesticide Safety Checklist

- Make sure you have been trained in the safe handling and use of the specific pesticide.
- Read the label and the MSDS that accompany the pesticide. Check that the MSDS is up to date. (It must be updated every three years.)
- Ensure that all containers have proper labelling to identify their contents.
- Store pesticides in a properly ventilated, locked area. Post warning signs.
- Check the weather to make sure that winds and rain won't affect your application.

On the Job

- Use PPE such as respirators and protective clothing, as recommended by the

manufacturers.
- Ensure that there are no other workers or bystanders who could be exposed to the pesticide.
- Follow safe work procedures.

End of Job

- If you used gloves, wash them under water before removing them, and then wash your hands after removal. If you used other protective clothing, remove and wash it immediately, and then shower to wash any residual pesticide off your body.
- Return pesticides to their correct storage facility. Ensure that the labels are visible and legible.

Employer Responsibilities

- Show workers where information about pesticide safety and emergency procedures is displayed at the workplace. This includes the location of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).
- Describe the medical assistance that will be provided in case of a work-related pesticide emergency.
- Show workers decontamination sites for washing pesticide residues off hands and body.
- Describe process for enforcing compliance with restricted entry intervals.
- Describe how workers will be notified about areas where pesticide application is taking place.
- Identify the trained and equipped pesticide handlers who will be present during pesticide application.
- Demonstrate and provide all PPE for handlers and workers who need to enter pesticide treated areas.
- Provide training for pesticide handlers on the safety and correct use of PPE during mixing, loading and application of all pesticides used.

FINAL WORD

The care of employer responsibility in relation to pesticide safety for workers is to have a platform of transparency and connection with workers in the dissemination and enforcement of pesticide safety protocol.