

# Spraying pesticides

Risk assessment tool for employers

June 2017

The type of pesticides used in the workplace – eg insecticides, weedicides, herbicides, fungicides – and the way they are used or handled may be harmful to the health of employees and contractors.

Many pesticides are classified as hazardous substances as they have the potential to harm human health. Part 4.1 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (OHS Regulations) imposes specific duties on employers aimed at ensuring the safe use of these substances in the workplace.<sup>1</sup>

Under the OHS Regulations employers must eliminate risks associated with hazardous substances so far as is reasonably practicable, or where this is not practicable, put controls in place to reduce those risks so far as reasonably practicable.

Where a risk cannot be eliminated, employers must reduce the risk with one or more of the following controls:

- substitution (eg replacing a pesticide with a less hazardous substance)
- isolation (eg distancing workers from pesticides)
- engineering controls (eg enclosed tractor cabin or use of robots to minimise operator exposure)

If a risk remains, employers must reduce it using administrative controls (eg instruct employees on how to use substances safely). Any remaining risk must then be controlled through the provision of personal protective equipment (eg ensuring the use of gloves, dust masks).

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* employers must provide employees and contractors with the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to enable them to perform their work safely and without risk to health.

For further information, refer to the Compliance Code for hazardous substances, available at: [worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://worksafe.vic.gov.au).

Don't confuse the OHS Regulations with the Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2012. The OHS Regulations are aimed at protecting people's health while the Dangerous Goods Regulations are aimed at preventing such things as fire, explosion or corrosion.

## Using this form

The purpose of this form is to help employers assess the risks associated with using pesticides in the workplace so that they can put appropriate controls in place.

This form divides the job of using pesticides into its different tasks, such as mixing and spraying.

Look at each task separately to work out if pesticides can harm the health of employees or contractors, as some tasks may be more dangerous than others.

Work through the form by ticking the boxes. Record any relevant information in the comments section.

At the end of each task you should decide whether there is a risk to health and how that risk can be controlled.



<sup>1</sup> Note that if organophosphate pesticides or pentachlorophenol are used health surveillance may be required.

# Checklist for Spraying pesticides

## Risk assessment checklist for spraying pesticides

Workplace/company:

Date:

Assessor:

This assessment can apply to more than one workplace or work area if the pesticides used are the same or of the same or similar form and are mixed and sprayed in the same way.

Product names:

What form do the pesticides come in?

_____	<input type="checkbox"/> liquid	<input type="checkbox"/> powder	<input type="checkbox"/> granular
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> liquid	<input type="checkbox"/> powder	<input type="checkbox"/> granular
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> liquid	<input type="checkbox"/> powder	<input type="checkbox"/> granular
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> liquid	<input type="checkbox"/> powder	<input type="checkbox"/> granular
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> liquid	<input type="checkbox"/> powder	<input type="checkbox"/> granular
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> liquid	<input type="checkbox"/> powder	<input type="checkbox"/> granular
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> liquid	<input type="checkbox"/> powder	<input type="checkbox"/> granular
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> liquid	<input type="checkbox"/> powder	<input type="checkbox"/> granular

Are all the pesticides labelled<sup>2</sup>?

yes  no

Have safety data sheets (SDSs) been obtained for each pesticide from the manufacturer or supplier<sup>3</sup>?

yes  no

Have the pesticides been included in a hazardous substances register<sup>4</sup>?

yes  no

Who uses or who may be exposed to these pesticides?

mixers/sprayers  thinners/pruners  
 pickers  other

How often are these pesticides used?

▪ Seasonal:

from: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_

▪ Approximate number of days per week:

\_\_\_\_\_

▪ Other:

\_\_\_\_\_

Have users of these pesticides been trained?

yes  no

If yes, what training has been undertaken?

ACPU training  Other

<sup>2</sup> All containers of pesticides must be labelled with the manufacturer's or importing supplier's label; for decanted substances the product name or some other means of identifying the pesticide must be used. Labels must remain legible and not be removed, defaced or altered.

<sup>3</sup> SDSs must be current, readily accessible to any employee who may be exposed to the pesticide, available in appropriate languages in addition to English, and must not be altered.

<sup>4</sup> A register of all hazardous substances (including pesticides) supplied to the workplace must be maintained by the employer. The register must include the product name of each substance and a copy of the SDSs. The register must be readily accessible to employees.





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- contact the skin?  yes  no
- be inhaled?  yes  no
- be ingested because food has come in contact with contaminated hands?  yes  no

## Comments

*As an employer, you must control any risk to health or safety by eliminating the risk or reducing the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.*

## Spraying

### Type of equipment used:

- tractor-drawn air blast sprayer  yes  no
- boom spray  yes  no  
type \_\_\_\_\_
- other, eg backpack  yes  no

*The equipment or spray technique used can affect how much pesticide may be inhaled or contact the skin.*

### How do you reduce the risk of exposure to the pesticide?

- by using a tractor with an enclosed cabin  yes  no  
If yes, is:
  - the cabin air filtered?  yes  no
  - a container of clean water carried for washing?  yes  no
  - a clean pair of gloves carried?  yes  no
- by using a more appropriate spray technique  yes  no  
If yes, which technique is used:
  - coarser spray, ie bigger droplets  yes  no
  - more directed spray  yes  no
  - spraying low to the ground  yes  no
  - other  yes  no

*If you are not using an enclosed tractor cabin or a safer spray technique you should think about doing so.*







## Further information

Further information on controlling risks associated with the use of pesticides can be obtained from:

*A step by step guide for managing chemicals in the workplace* – WorkSafe

*A practical safety guide for the horticulture industry in the Murray Valley*, section 4 – WorkSafe

*A guide to using agricultural chemicals in Victoria* – Department of Environment and Primary Industries

*This Checklist is intended for general use only and may not be applicable in every circumstance. You should always check any applicable legislation and make your own judgement about what action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with the law. Accordingly, WorkSafe Victoria cannot be held responsible and extends no warranties as to the suitability of the information for any particular purpose; or actions taken by third parties as a result of information contained in the Checklist.*

*This guidance has been reviewed and updated for the sole purpose of amending year and regulation references relating to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, in line with amendments which came into effect on 18 June 2017.*