

## Storing pesticides safely on the farm

Besides taking care when using pesticides, you need to store them safely. Refer to the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for each pesticide. These are available on request from the manufacturer or from your pesticide supplier.

Keep all pesticides used on the farm, or destined for disposal, in an area specially designed for this purpose. Safe storage maximises the life of pesticides and also protects people, animals and the environment.

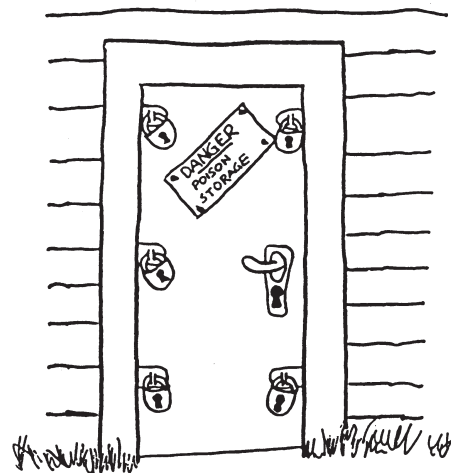
Because farm chemicals are expensive and control recommendations may change from year to year, buy only as much of a particular chemical as you will need for the season.

### A farm pesticide store needs the following features

- It is a separate, well-ventilated cupboard or building, used only for this purpose and is preferably fireproof. It is located well away from houses, pumps, tanks, water supplies and domestic animals. Food, safety equipment, seeds, stock feed or fertilisers are not stored within this area.
- It provides a cool, dry place, that is out of direct sunlight for appropriate pesticide storage. Temperatures should be kept between 5° and 30°C.
- It has some form of spillage containment or bunding. This bunding must be able to hold 25% of the quantity of *liquid* pesticide stored or a minimum of 100% of the largest container

or tank stored. For example, if you store 80 L of pesticides and the largest container is a 40 L drum, your bunding must be able to hold 40 L of *liquid*. Bunding can be provided by an impervious floor such as concrete.

- If a container or tank of pesticide has to be kept outside, bunding to contain 110% of the liquid stored.
- It has shelving made of impervious material rather than something absorbent like timber. For small quantities of pesticide, place the containers in drip trays. For larger amounts, use strong steel mesh in an area bunded with a concrete floor. Put packages of dry formulations into sturdy plastic bags for extra protection and to keep the contents dry.



Keep the storage area locked and childproof.



- Liquids should not be kept stored above solids.
- It is not in an area likely to flood or with a water table close to the surface.
- It is always kept locked.
- It is clearly signposted, eg. ‘Chemical store - keep out’, ‘Danger - keep out’, so that everyone will know that pesticides are stored there. A ‘No smoking’ sign is also needed because several pesticides are combustible. These signs are legally required and should be weatherproof. If you store large quantities of dangerous goods, the relevant dangerous goods ‘diamond’ signs are required.
- Children, animals (including stock and pets), and intruders cannot get into the store.
- Water for washing, a hand basin and shower for people using the store is nearby. It is also more convenient and safer to have a water supply close to the store for making up tank mixes.
- It should allow herbicides to be kept apart from other farm chemicals, so there can be no cross-contamination.

### For emergencies

It is advisable to have a fire extinguisher available, but be sure to have the right type for chemical spills. To contain accidental spills, you can purchase special spill kits (pillows or absorbent material) from suppliers of protective equipment. It is also a good idea to have a list of emergency telephone numbers handy, such as: the Poisons Information Centre, your local doctor and the local fire station.

### When do you need to notify WorkCover?

You may need to notify WorkCover and prepare both a site plan and emergency plan if you store large amounts of dangerous goods. To find this out, you need to know the dangerous goods class and packaging group (PG), which are on the label. You need to notify WorkCover to store pesticides of Class 6 if you have more than: 500 kg or L of PG I, 2,500 kg or L of PG II or 10,000 kg or L of PG III. For other classes get more advice.

Contact the WorkCover Information Centre if you would like to check the details (phone 131 050).

### Regular checks

Check the contents of the store regularly and keep lids tightly closed to stop vapours accumulating. Place items securely on shelves or in trays so they cannot fall and break. From time to time, check all containers to make sure none are leaking or broken. Remove any such containers carefully from the store and dispose of in the proper way (see other SpraySense leaflets on “Managing chemical spills” and Disposal of pesticide containers).

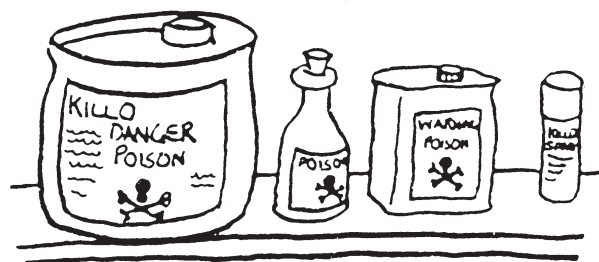
Make sure the labels remain clearly legible. One idea is to cover each label with transparent film or tape after purchase.

Dry formulations may cake if they get wet or are exposed to high humidity. Put the package into a plastic bag when you first open it and reseal after each use.

### Keep records

Keep a list of all the pesticides you have stored – it is a requirement of the OHS Regulation 2001. In an emergency (for example to help the Fire Brigade if there is a fire in the area) it could be vitally important. Remember to keep the list, or at least a copy, well away from the pesticide store. Also it is a good idea to keep copies of Material Safety Data Sheets for each pesticide stored.

Records of when you last purchased and used each pesticide could also be handy. It is also useful to note the date of purchase on each container you buy.



*Be sure pesticides are stored properly and safely. Pesticides must be kept in their original containers.*

## **Shelf life**

Many products do not have an easily-identified or effective shelf life recorded on the label. If you are not sure whether a pesticide is still okay to use, call the manufacturer. Two years is considered reasonable shelf life for most pesticides, and many will remain effective for longer if stored properly.

Always keep pesticides in their original containers. It is illegal to decant them into other containers such as jars or soft drink bottles. This practice is dangerous because other people, especially children, may think the contents are something else.