

Herbicide Safety



USING HERBICIDES SAFELY

POTENTIAL HAZARDS

There are three main routes available for absorption of hazardous substances:

- Inhalation – breathing of the substance.
- Skin Contact – contact between the skin (and eyes) and the hazardous substance.
- Ingestion – swallowing of the hazardous substance.

SAFETY NOTES

1. Wear appropriate face mask/respirator in accordance with the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).
2. Store protective equipment away from the pesticide/herbicide.
3. Persons using Pesticides/herbicides, or any hazardous substance must always wash hands and face before eating, drinking, smoking or using toilets.
4. Discard used face masks or remove respirator cartridges and wash mask with soap and water and thoroughly rinse with clean water.
5. If a person comes into contact with the chemical/poison, take action in accordance with the Safety Data Sheet and/or contact the Poisons Hotline 13 11 26.

PREVENT CONTAMINATION OF WATER SUPPLY AND ASSOCIATED HEALTH RISKS TO HUMANS, ANIMALS, FISH AND BIRDS

- Herbicide tank filling water supply pipework must contain a backflow preventer (RPZ). There must be a complete physical break (air gap) between the outlet end of the fill pipe and the top or overflow rim of the reservoir tank.
- Fill hoses or stand pipe must not enter tank as back siphoning may occur.
- Do not dispose of unused herbicides in creeks, drains, gullies, areas of native vegetation or areas where the public may access.

SAFETY REMINDERS

- Safety glasses must be worn at all times.
- Steel capped footwear must be worn at all times.
- Chemical resistant gloves must be worn.
- Take action to avoid Spray Drift.
- Long and loose hair must be contained.
- Close fitting/protective clothing must be worn.
- Appropriate face mask/respirator must be worn.
- Avoid physical contact with chemicals.

OPERATIONAL SAFETY CHECKS

STORAGE AND DIRECTIONS

- Read all directions on the chemical container and Safety Data Sheet (SDS).
- Container is only to be open for the time necessary for the removal of herbicide.
- Return pesticide/herbicide to lockable storage area when work is completed.
- Store in a safe place, preferably a locked storeroom with ventilation.
- Do not store herbicide in unapproved containers.

MIXING

- Always mix in an open, flat area free of obstacles.
- Avoid splashing, overfilling and rinse measuring containers.

SPRAYING

- Do not spray in conditions greater than 15km/hr or temps greater than 30°C.
- Reduce herbicide spray drift, particularly near property boundaries.
- Be aware of the immediate surroundings – holes, trip hazards, low branches, trees, embankments, neighbours, and members of the public.

BE PREPARED

- Keep your knowledge of application methods updated. Attend equipment manufacturer or product manufacturer field days when these are organised in your area.
- Read the chemical product label and follow the instructions accurately. Many products have specific instructions dealing with conditions and spray equipment.
- If you don't understand a label instruction, ask someone who does before commencing the application. Product labels provide contact details of the manufacturer who can provide reliable technical advice to assist you if necessary.
- If you're not sure what you're doing, consider engaging a professional contractor.

THINK BEFORE SPRAYING

- Have you notified neighbours?
- Have you chosen the right chemical for weeds being targeted?
- Have you chosen the right equipment for the job?
- Is the equipment in good working order?
- Are the weather conditions right for spraying?
- Are there sensitive areas nearby that require special care when spraying (e.g., schools, grazing livestock or susceptible crops)?
- Have you considered your own personal safety needs and protective equipment?

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland
<https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/>
- Spray Drift Issues:
<http://www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/agriculture/land-management/chemical-controls/spray-drift-issues/reporting-spray-drift>
- Weed Identification:
<https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/land-management/health-pests-weeds-diseases/weeds-diseases/controlling-weeds/identify>

BE CAREFUL OF SURROUNDING AREAS AND AVOID SPRAYING DRIFT

- Identify sensitive crops and environmental areas (e.g., creeks and streams, livestock paddocks or schools) around the area where you intend to spray.
- Discuss your spray plans with your neighbours and contractors. Good communication can often avoid complaints from neighbours or prevent misunderstandings and unnecessary conflict.
- If possible, maintain a buffer zone between areas of application and areas where there is a risk of damage from spray drift.

CHECK WEATHER CONDITIONS

- Measure and record the weather conditions before and after the applications. If you think they have changed, stop, and measure them during the application as well.
- Spray only in favourable weather conditions. Ideal wind speeds are between 3-15km/h.
- Ideally, wind should be blowing away from susceptible crops. If not, try leaving a buffer zone.
- Avoid spraying in temperatures near or above 30°C and when humidity is low as spray droplet size may be reduced, increasing the risk of spray drift.
- Do not spray when inversion conditions exist. Visual indicators include no wind, fog, dew, frost and smoke or dust hanging in the air or forming distinct layers. Inversion conditions are very prevalent in Australia.

KEEP RECORDS

- Keep detailed records of each spray application. Good records will prove beneficial if complaints are made, particularly if you need to accurately recall information months after a spray event.
- You must record:
 - Herbicide used and mixing rate; and
 - Amount of herbicide used, and weeds sprayed.