

Understanding Pesticide Labels

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

- Pesticide labels contain important safety information.
- Read the label each time you use a pesticide.
- Ask for help if you can't understand a label.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

Bring copies of a pesticide label commonly used in your operation to the training session.

What is a pesticide label?

- The government requires pesticide manufacturers to put labels on the containers of all of the pesticides we use.
- The label includes important information, such as how to apply, store and dispose of the pesticide and what to do in an emergency. It also tells you which crops you can use the pesticide on and how toxic it is to people.
- If a label is missing or damaged, ask your supervisor for a new one. We have a special location where we keep pesticide labels.
- If you have trouble understanding a label, ask a co-worker or your supervisor for help.
- This is a sample pesticide label.

Note to trainer: Show trainees a sample label. Tell them the name of the product and what you use it for.

Why read a pesticide label?

- Carefully following directions on a pesticide label will help protect you from exposure to the chemical.
- Labels are constantly changing, that's why it's important to read the label of the product you are currently using.
- If you are using a pesticide with an old and a new label, follow the instructions on the new label.
- If you are using two different pesticides in an application, follow the stricter label requirements.

When should you read a pesticide label?

1. Before you apply the pesticide.
2. Before mixing the pesticide, if mixing is part of your job.
3. Before storing or disposing of the pesticide or its container.



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See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

Understanding Pesticide Labels

What is on a pesticide label?



- No two pesticide labels are exactly alike. But don't let that confuse you. Here is some basic information common to pesticide labels:
Note to trainer: Point to each section of your sample label as you talk.
- **Name of the product.** Here you will find a trade or brand name and a chemical or "common" name.
- **Ingredients.** The active ingredient is the one that affects the pest you are trying to control. This is important information for a doctor to have in an emergency.
- **Manufacturer's name and address.** This tells you who to contact for more information.
- **Signal words and symbols.** The most dangerous pesticides say "Danger" or "Danger-Poison." The "Danger-Poison" pesticides also have a skull and crossbones symbol. Moderately toxic pesticides say "Warning." Low-toxicity pesticides say "Caution."
- **Statement of practical treatment.** This gives you first aid instructions in case of exposure.
- **Precautionary statements.** This section tells you what hazards the pesticide may present. Most labels also specify what personal protective equipment handlers and other applicators must wear.
- **Directions for use.** This section tells you how to safely apply the chemical. Many labels also have an "Agricultural Use Requirements" box. Look here to learn how much time you must wait to safely re-enter an area after the pesticide has been applied. If some workers must enter the area sooner, this section tells them what personal protective equipment to wear.
- **Storage and disposal.** Read this part of the label for safe storage and disposal instructions.

ABC PESTICIDE
 A Weed, Grass and Harvest Aid Herbicide
 RESTRICTED USE PESTICIDE
 For retail sale to and use only by Certified Applicators.

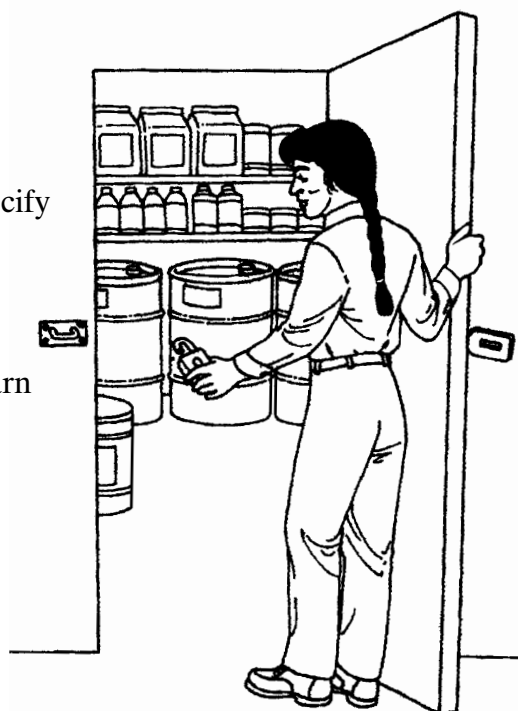
ACTIVE INGREDIENT:
 Paraquat dichloride
 (1, 1'-dimethyl-4, 4' bipyridinium dichloride)..... 37.05%
 INERT INGREDIENTS..... 62.95%
 TOTAL..... 100.0%

Contains 2.5 lbs. paraquat cation per gallon.
 EPA Reg. No. 00000-000

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN


DANGER-POISON


ONE SWALLOW CAN KILL! Symptoms Are Prolonged and Painful.
 Onset of Symptoms May Be Delayed for Up to 3 Days After Swallowing.



Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions, then review the Pesticide Label Do's and Don'ts.

PESTICIDE LABEL DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Closely follow all directions on the pesticide label.
- Read the label each time you prepare to apply a pesticide.
- Look at the label to find out when you can safely re-enter an area where pesticides have been applied.

DON'T:

- Ever use an unknown pesticide that is in an unmarked container.
- Forget to wear the personal protective equipment specified on the pesticide label.
- Hesitate to ask for help if you can't understand a pesticide label.

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