



HOW TO HANDLE PESTICIDES

Each year, Florida businesses are faced with deciding the best way to handle pesticides to minimize adverse impacts to people and the environment. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection regulates pesticide waste disposal, and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services administers the registration and regulation of pesticides. The following guidance can help businesses manage pesticides safely from purchase through disposal.

Selection and Handling

- » Choose the least toxic pesticide available.
- » Inspect and calibrate spraying equipment frequently. Replace leaking hoses, fittings and nozzles.
- » Clean up all spills and leaks immediately. Keep clean-up tools and supplies, such as containment drums, cat litter, shovels, brooms and dustpans, in readily available storage areas.
- » Spilled dry pesticides can be handled as a product, rather than a waste, if label instructions are followed.

Training

- » Train new employees to use pesticides efficiently, using minimal amounts to complete the job.
- » Ensure that employees follow label directions and precautions listed on Material Safety Data Sheets.
- » Inform employees of the importance of pollution prevention.

Spill Prevention

- » Install anti-siphon devices on wells or hydrants to prevent reverse flow of liquids into the water supply.
- » Never put a hose in a sprayer tank.
- » Supervise sprayer filling.

- » Use closed handling systems that transfer the pesticide directly from the storage container to applicator equipment.

Rinsewaters

- » Minimize rinsewaters by washing equipment only when necessary.
- » Rinsewaters can be collected for use at a later time to make a batch of the same or a compatible pesticide.
- » Rinsewaters containing pesticides regulated as hazardous waste should be used within 90 days. If stored longer than 90 days, notify Florida Department of Environmental Protection as a permit is required.
- » Rinsewaters should never be discharged to the ground, septic systems, ditches or streams.

Storage

- » Store pesticides in clearly labeled and segregated containers.
- » Place bulk tanks in adequate secondary containment that will capture any spills.
- » Store containers off the ground in an area where there is no possibility of flooding.
- » Store dry and liquid products separately, with dry products above liquids to prevent wetting from spills.

- » Storage facilities should be dry and well-ventilated with proper fire protection equipment.
- » Avoid storing pesticides that will not be used. When possible, return them to the manufacturer for relabeling or reprocessing.

Empty Containers and Liners

- » Containers or liners that held pesticides listed as hazardous waste must be empty before disposal.
- » Triple-rinse containers with water only or power wash to remove the pesticide.
- » After triple-rinsing or power washing, punch holes in the pesticide containers to prevent reuse. Store containers out of the weather, if possible.
- » Follow directions on the label for container disposal.

Operation Cleansweep

Florida farms and other eligible businesses can safely and economically dispose of unwanted pesticides through Operation Cleansweep. The program collected more than 60 tons of pesticides in 2014-15.