

# TECH CORNER: PESTICIDE SPILLS

by Dr. Bob Davis

## *Tools for handling pesticide spills*

A “Pesticide Spill” can be defined as an accidental release of a pesticide into the environment. Using a protocol for handling spills could dramatically increase our confidence in handling most pesticide spill events. When spills happen, use The Three C’s: Control, Containment and Clean-Up. However, in order for a PMP to be successful, he must have the proper tools. Here is some equipment that can help.

Every technician should have a “Spill Control Kit” in his vehicle. The kit should be stored in a readily available spot. Commercial kits are available from many of our distributors. However, much of the material can be purchased separately. Some of the items you may want to have include:

- **Clean Water:** A gallon container of clean water should be available for rinsing material off skin or rinsing pesticide exposed eyes. A portable eye wash container with solution may come in handy. Water may not be readily available. Having your own can be helpful.
- **Detergent:** A small plastic bottle with detergent can be used in washing contaminated skin or the spill area during clean-up.
- **Clothing:** Fresh clothing should be available. A technician needs to remove contaminated clothing from the spill. Disposable Tyvek or similar type coveralls are non-bulky and excellent for this purpose.
- **Stakes, Twine and Flagging:** In many instances a spill area will need to be cordoned off from unprotected people. Tent stakes, twine and red flagging strips can be used to “rope” off the area. This will help protect bystanders and keep them out of your way!
- **Chemical Resistant Gloves, Boots and Eyewear:** Put an extra pair of gloves in the kit and always have your chemical resistant boots ready for use. A pair of resistant “slip overs” or “half-boots” can also be put in the kit and wore over your work shoes when needed.
- **Clean Rags/Paper Towels:** An unopened bag of cloth rags is best to have in the kit. Paper towels can also be used.
- **Absorbent Materials:** Many materials are available to soak up or stop liquid spills. Commercial materials can be bought from our distributors. Auto parts stores have spill materials available for liquid spills. A container of kitty litter, sawdust, vermiculite or sand can also be placed in the kit. Many commercial kits will have absorbent pillows, snakes or pads. All of these are very helpful in containing



*A portable eye wash container with solution may come in handy since clean water may not be readily available.*

and cleaning up the spill.

- **Small Shovel or Dustpan:** These items can be used in spreading the absorbent materials and in collection during clean-up.
- **Large Capacity Plastic Zipper-Locking Bags:** These can be used in storing contaminated absorbent clothing, rags, towels, pads or other materials. They can then be sealed for disposal. Plastic trash bags can also be kept for use.
- **Contact Information:** Telephone numbers of local authorities, poison control centers, local hospitals, fire marshals, and the local emergency management agency should be included in a waterproof covering.
- **Standard Operating Procedure.** A protocol for handling spill emergencies should be in the kit.

The material listed above should be stored in a water-resistant sealable container. A 5-gallon plastic bucket with a lid is an option. Sign the container "Spill Control Kit." Of course, the bucket can be used to store contaminated materials.

Other personal protective equipment (eyewear, dust masks, respirators, etc.) that you use during your services should also be used when needed. Remember to have all pesticide labels and MSDS' on hand for immediate use.

Having the proper tools can make handling spills an easy chore. Having a kit available such as the one here can help us during these trying instances.

Good Luck and Let's Be Careful Out There!



*Many times a spill area will need to be cordoned off from unprotected people. Rope off the contaminated area to help protect bystanders and keep them out your way.*



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