

PERSONAL & VEHICLE SAFETY: EQUIPMENT

Persons involved in the pest control industry require safety equipment for protection from the potential hazards from exposure to pesticides, hand tools, power tools, and varied workplace conditions. The responsibility for the employer to provide a safe environment in which to work begins with the availability of the safety equipment, along with the initial training for each, and with the continuing education to provide confidence in the use of the equipment. The list of equipment may be as short as what some pesticide label requires and as comprehensive as risks in exposure from expanded tasks and treatment environments where employees will find themselves.

PERSONAL SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- Respirator
- Self-contained breathing apparatus
- Eye protection
- Eye wash
- Unlined boots
- Unlined gloves
- Bump hat or hard hat
- Coveralls or chemical resistant garment
- First aid kit
- Liquid soap
- Disposable towels
- Rope and safety harness Knee pads

VEHICLE SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- Anti-back flow valve
- SABC fire extinguisher Spill control kit
- Audible back-up warning device
- Warning flares or reflective triangle Wheel chocks
- Emergency Response Guidebook Label & MSDS book
- Emergency procedures & phone numbers

Employers should design a safety equipment inventory checklist. Basic equipment should be provided during training and checked at least monthly for proper maintenance and working order. Lost or defective equipment should be replaced. Your policies should indicate replacement cost on equipment lost or abused. Employees should acknowledge receipt of personal protective equipment, understanding their obligation to use and maintain them, and to notify management without delay when replacement is required. Depending upon the function of the technician and the vehicle, not all items are required on all vehicles.

PERSONAL SAFETY EQUIPMENT

1. Respirators should be used when handling certain materials and applying pesticides in spaces as required by the label. Only wear respirators that are approved by the Mine Safety & Health Administration/National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health for protection against specific contaminants to which the employee may be exposed. Replaceable filter cartridges must be rated for use with organic pesticide dusts and vapors. Filters are only useful for a short period of time and should be replaced often. Respirators should be fit tested (small, medium, large) before using. Facial hairs (beards, sideburns and mustache) could prevent a good face seal.

2. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus should be used when you will be exposed to fumigants. Always check to ensure time of air is charged to maximum prior to entering contaminated areas and have available spare cylinders on hand at all times. Never enter structures without a qualified partner. All users must be trained on how to use and maintain SCBA's prior to entering any hazardous environment.

3. Eye Protection: Protection must be worn during pesticide mixing or overhead applications and when utilizing power tools and any other operation that presents potential eye injury. Eye protective equipment should provide protection against hazards exposed to, be reasonably comfortable, and should accommodate being worn over prescription glasses. As an alternative, full face shields may offer better comfort.

4. Eye Wash: An irrigation type container is ideal for washing foreign materials and contaminants from the eye.

5. Unlined Boots: Wear unlined chemical resistant boots that cover your ankles when applying or handling large volumes of moderately or highly toxic materials. Nitrile and butyl boots appear to provide the best protection. Pant legs should cover the outside of your boots to prevent drainage inside boot. Wash boots with detergent after each use.

6. Unlined Gloves: Elbow length, chemical resistant, neoprene, nitrile, butyl, polyethylene, PVC or natural rubber (latex) should be used when handling or mixing pesticide concentrates or when applying high volumes of diluted materials, and when indicated by the pesticide label. Natural rubber is effective only for dry formulations. Do not use gloves on certain fumigants as noted on the label. Always wash gloves after each use and replace when cut or torn.

7. Bump Hat: Head protective equipment should be worn in areas where there is possible danger of head injuries from impact. Bump hats are designed for persons working in attics, crawl spaces, and while performing duties where there is a possibility of running into objects and structures (window air conditioners, etc.) These are often and may be in your blind spots.

8. Hard Hat: Hard hats differ from bump hats in that not only does it protect from potential impacts, it should also protect from potential penetrations, most commonly found around construction sites.

9. Coveralls provide protection from minor scrapes and cuts when crawling and working in tight areas. They should be washed daily and replaced when torn. It is advisable to wear a size larger than your normal size for comfort and ease of movement. Most coveralls will not provide protection from pesticide spills, sprays or mist.

10. Chemical Resistant Garment: Depending on the application, as a minimum, use only tightly woven (cotton) to non-woven in selecting the type of material. Although they offer some protection from dermal exposure to pesticide dusts, granules, and powder forms, they provide little to no protection against spills, fumigants or mists. Laminated or coated type fabrics offer better protection in spray and mist

applications. Check to ensure that protective garments are chemical-resistant when handling highly toxic pesticides.

11. First Aid Kit: Keep a well-equipped first aid kit in the vehicle at all times. Kits at a minimum should include several forms of bandages or Band-Aids, burn ointments or sprays and anti-septic ointment or sprays. A first-aid kit will be used most often for minor cuts and abrasions, the kit should include a first aid guide and be inspected regularly and restocked as necessary.

12. Liquid Soap is an integral part of any safety equipment inventory.

13. Disposable Paper Towels: Preferred over cloth types due to ease of disposal and the risk of inadvertent use of dried contaminated cloth towels.

14. Rope and Safety Harness: These are necessary when working in elevated areas to prevent falling from heights that could cause injury or death. Investigate tensile strength to ensure adequate weight requirements.

VEHICLE SAFETY EQUIPMENT

1. Anti-Back Flow Valve prevents possible contamination of our water supplies from the inadvertent back-flow of pesticides into water spigots when mixing and filling pesticides into spray tanks.

2. Fire Extinguisher: A minimum of 2ABC rating for passenger cars, and a 5ABC rating for service vehicles. Portable Fire Extinguishers should be inspected monthly and replaced or regarded as indicated by its gauge.

3. Spill Control Kit should contain absorbent materials, paper towels, whisk broom, dust pan, plastic bags with ties, detergent, bleach, yellow tape to cordon off an area, and a plastic container. Absorbent materials should be adequate to absorb the maximum amount of liquid materials carried in a vehicle. Spill control kits are available commercially from distributors.

4. If respiration fails, artificial respiration by any appropriate means may be used, and if necessary this may be performed using an oxygen-rich atmosphere.

5. If exposure has been severe or prolonged, pulmonary irritation and a typical pneumonia may develop which should be treated by antibiotic drugs and other measures appropriate to the treatment of pneumonia from any other cause.

6. Convulsions may require one of the short-acting barbiturates for control.

4.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS - SUMMARY

Take great care when handling pesticides; do not become over-confident. Accidents happen mostly through misuse; and yet safe handling is mainly common sense and not difficult to practice. As Branch Director and qualified P.C.O. it is your responsibility to encourage a better knowledge and know-how regarding the use of pesticides. This calls for regular training and reminder sessions, and co-operation/liaison with chemical manufacturers and the Department of Agriculture.