

 FACT SHEET

# Storage of agricultural pesticides

OAR 437 • Division 4/N



This fact sheet provides guidance about safely storing pesticides on your farm, ranch, or other agricultural facility. It is important to understand Oregon OSHA's standard, OAR 437-004-1680, *Storage of Hazardous Chemicals*, as well as regulations from other agencies.

## Where to store

Carefully consider soil and land surface characteristics when selecting a storage site to prevent contamination of groundwater and to minimize the potential for run-off into surface water or other sensitive areas. Refer to pesticide labels for guidance on storing, mixing, or loading at the appropriate distances from water sources.

If winds blow mostly from one direction, locate your storage facility downwind from dwellings and other areas where people spend time.

Keep food and animal feed separate from stored chemicals to prevent cross-contamination.

## The storage facility

Keep the pesticide storage area locked. Keeping your storage area or facility as small as practical allows you to have only the chemicals on site that you really need. Storage facilities should be constructed with nonflammable materials, when possible.

Chemical storage must be in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions on the label or safety data sheet (SDS) to prevent conditions that could adversely affect container integrity or product stability.

Physically separate substances and label each area to prevent the mixing of incompatible types of chemicals.

There must be enough natural or artificial light inside the storage area to allow workers to move and work safely. The rule requires at least 20 foot-candles (215.28 lux) of light.

Ventilate chemical storage areas to ensure that air contaminants are less than 25 percent of the lower explosive level (LEL) of any stored chemical before employees enter the facility. The permissible exposure limits (PELs) in OAR 437-004-9000, *Air Contaminants*, also apply.



## Where you store restricted-use pesticides:

- ✓ Lock the storage area to prevent access by unauthorized people.
- ✓ Provide separate sections within the storage area for each category of pesticide product. Examples include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and fumigants. Label these areas by the general category.
- ✓ Ensure floors and shelves are constructed with a chemically-resistant material; or coated, sealed, or accompanied with secondary containment that prevents the absorption of the hazardous chemicals.
- ✓ Provide sufficient containment of any potential leaks or spills when the storage area contains enough chemicals that a leak or spill could cause the material to leave the storage facility.



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## Safe storage practices

Storage, handling, and removing hazardous chemical containers must not create hazards to workers.

Follow all manufacturers' instructions, usually found on the chemical container's label or on the SDS. Remember that for pesticides, the label is the law.

All containers must have a legible label. Keep chemicals in their original containers. Never store chemicals in containers normally used for other purposes, such as food storage. Store pesticides in their own separate area away from food and personal items and away from sources of fire or ignition.

Keep your SDS and fire extinguishers where they are safely accessible in an emergency.



## Local responders

Notify your local emergency responders (fire and police) about where you keep your pesticides and other hazardous chemicals. Chemical storage areas should

comply with appropriate state and local fire codes. Identify chemical storage buildings with a sign in accordance with NFPA 704. For example, some pesticides are flammable and will produce toxic fumes when they burn. Other pesticides – such as the fumigant aluminum phosphide – react violently in contact with water.



Aluminum Phosphide first responder building sign



## Other requirements

Storage of Hazardous Chemicals, OAR 437-004-1680 provides additional information not included in this fact sheet.

Other Oregon OSHA rules that apply to the safe storage or handling of chemicals:

- **Subdivision 4/H**, Hazardous Materials
- **Subdivision 4/I**, Protective Equipment
- **Subdivision 4/K**, Medical/First Aid
- **Subdivision 4/S**, Electricity
- **Subdivision 4/W**, Worker Protection Standard
- **Subdivision 4/Z**, Chemical/Toxins

## Other regulators

The following agencies also have rules and responsibilities regarding the storage of pesticides and other hazardous chemicals:

- **Oregon Department of Environmental Quality**  
[www.oregon.gov/DEQ/index.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ/index.shtml)
- **Office of State Fire Marshal**  
[www.oregon.gov/OOHS/SFM/index.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OOHS/SFM/index.shtml)
- **Building Codes Division**  
<https://www.oregon.gov/bcd/Pages/index.aspx>
- **Oregon Department of Agriculture**  
[www.oregon.gov/ODA/index.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/index.shtml)
- Your local fire and law enforcement agencies

*The Technical Section of Oregon OSHA produced this fact sheet to highlight health and safety programs and rules. The information is intended to supplement the rules and provide best practices to employers.*