

Insecticide Safety Considerations

Communication and safety are important considerations to avoid accidental insecticide poisoning. Scouts should be familiar with commonly used insecticides. Talk frequently with growers, co-workers and employers. Know when and what insecticide applications have been made to a field. Someone should know your approximate whereabouts and schedule in case of accident or emergency. Cell phones or two-way radios are suggested as a means of emergency communication.

Know Your Insecticides

Insecticides vary widely in their toxicity to people. Never enter a field immediately after an insecticide application. This is especially dangerous for highly toxic insecticides. Generally, the organophosphate (OP) and carbamate insecticides are the most acutely toxic classes of insecticides. Insecticide labels provide information on minimum re-entry intervals following an insecticide application, treatment information in the case of poisoning, and other information. The table below provides a relative index of acute toxicity for some common insecticides. This is primarily for dermal (skin) exposure. Many

relatively safe insecticides can be very dangerous if ingested because even insecticides with low toxicity are often mixed with dangerous chemicals. Always seek immediate medical attention if any insecticide is swallowed.

Insecticide Poisoning

Symptoms may include eye tearing, blurred vision, salivation, unusual sweating, coughing, vomiting and frequent bowel movements and urination. Breathing may become difficult, and muscles may twitch and become weak. It is rare, but death can occur. Symptoms last hours to days after exposure to carbamate insecticides but can last for weeks after exposure to organophosphate insecticides. Pyrethroid insecticides can cause sneezing, eye tearing, coughing and occasional difficulty breathing. Serious symptoms rarely develop.

Treatment for suspected insecticide poisoning should be immediate. Insecticide labels contain treatment instructions for physicians. Remove clothing and wash any skin exposed to insecticide.

Relative Insecticide Toxicity of Some Commonly Used Insecticides

Insecticide (common name)	Risk level*	Insecticide (common name)	Risk level*
Ammo (cypermethrin)	L-M	Intruder (acetamiprid)	L
Asana XL (esfenvalerate)	L-M	Karate (λ -cyhalothrin)	L-M
Baythroid XL (β -cyfluthrin)	L-M	Lannate (methomyl)	H
Bidrin (dicrotophos)	H	Larvin (thiodicarb)	M
Brigade, Capture (bifenthrin)	L-M	Lorsban (chlorpyrifos)	M
Centric or Cruiser (thiamethoxam)	L	Malathion	L
Comite (propargite)	M	Methyl parathion	H
Counter (terbufos)	H	Monitor (methamidophos)	M
Curacron (profenofos)	H	Mustang Max (Z-cypermethrin)	L-M
Delta Gold (deltamethrin)	L-M	Orthene (acephate)	L-M
Denim (emamectin benzoate)	L	Trimax or Gaucho (imidacloprid)	L
Diamond (novaluron)	L	Sevin (carbaryl)	L
Dicofol	M	Steward (indoxacarb)	L
Dimethoate	M-H	Temik (aldicarb)	H
Furadan (carbofuran)	H	Tracer (spinosad)	L
Intrepid (methoxyfenozide)	L	Vydate (oxamyl)	H

* L = Low, M = Moderate, H = High

Other Safety Considerations

Besides the risk of pesticide poisonings, and more commonly, scouts may suffer heat stroke. Symptoms of heat stroke include weakness, dizziness, rapid pulse, reddish tinge to skin, nausea and/or vomiting, unconsciousness and high body temperature.

Safety Tips:

- Always follow label instructions concerning re-entry intervals and protective clothing requirements following an insecticide application.
- To avoid heat stroke, drink plenty of water, wear a wide-brimmed hat and take breaks in the shade.
- Pants rather than shorts are recommended to reduce wear and tear on your legs. They also keep your skin from contacting any insecticide residue on plants.
- Bring a change of clothes, particularly later in the year when early-morning dew will soak your clothing. Not only will you be more comfortable, but dry clothes are a better barrier to any insecticide residue that may be present on plants.
- Wash your hands before eating or drinking.
- If possible, schedule your hardest work during cooler times of the day.
- You are more likely to get in an automobile or four-wheeler accident than to be poisoned by pesticides, so drive carefully!