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## Section 21

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# Pesticide Fires

A fire in a pesticide storage area can be extremely dangerous. The fire is the main hazard, but there is additional danger of pesticide poisoning and contamination.

### Pre-Fire Plan

Prepare for the possibility of a fire. You will have a greater chance of reducing health hazards and environmental contamination.



1. Inform the local fire department that you store pesticides. In the case of a fire, the fire fighters can be better prepared for the dangers involved.
2. Store all of your pesticides in one area. Make sure the building carries the warning “Chemical (or Pesticide) Storage – Authorized Persons Only - Warning”.
3. Keep an up-to-date inventory of the pesticides in your storage area. Keep a copy of the MSDS for each product at your farm.
4. Consider taking the time to carefully map a floor plan of the pesticide storage facility and the immediate surrounding area. The sketch of the storage area should:
  - < locate all emergency and protective equipment plus indicate the position of all windows and doors
  - < indicate all water sources and the volume of water available for fire fighting

- < map the drainage system of the site to help determine how to control run off water
  - < note nearby buildings and their functions
  - < include the fence line showing all access routes.
5. Make a plan for dikes and drainage so that run off water is prevented from entering water courses.
  6. Purchase and keep drain covers (large enough to cover any floor drains) close by. Use them to cover any floor drains in nearby buildings (e.g., barns, implement sheds) to prevent run off water from entering the drains.
  7. Teach your farm workers what to do in an emergency. It's a good idea to have a written emergency fire plan and to have regular fire drills. Workers should also be trained in the proper use of safety equipment. This will ensure that all employees can respond properly in an emergency situation. Remember to inform all employees if any changes are made to the plan.
  8. If a fire occurs, the first priority is to get everybody out and notify the fire department. Do not take unnecessary risks in fire fighting. It is wiser to wait for the fire department than to be poisoned.



**If a spill, fire or theft occurs involving pesticides, you must call the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. (Reg.914, s.29)**

**The following  
general rules  
apply to  
pesticide fires**

- 1. Evacuate and isolate the area immediately.**  
Anyone in the vicinity of the fire may be exposed to toxic fumes, poisonous run off, and concentrated pesticides from leaking or exploding storage containers.
- 2. Contact the local fire department** immediately when smoke or fire is first detected. Remind fire fighters of the additional danger of burning pesticides and of the importance of wearing supplied air respirators.
- 3. Foam or fog nozzles are recommended** when fighting a pesticide fire. Advise fire fighters to **use as little water as possible** and control all run off water to avoid contaminating the surrounding area.
- 4. Wear protective equipment to protect yourself** against spills, splashes, and toxic fumes.

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## Review Questions

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1. If a spill, fire or theft occurs, you must notify the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.

TRUE

FALSE

2. Why should you tell the local fire department where your pesticide storage area is located?

3. What are the 4 general rules that apply to pesticide fires?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_