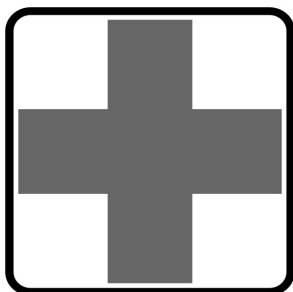

Section 11

First Aid

Emergency Action



Although pesticides can be dangerous, they are unlikely to harm you if you:

- ▶ handle the products carefully
- ▶ follow label directions
- ▶ wear all the protective clothing and personal protective equipment you need. **IIII▶** See the **Protective Clothing and Personal Protective Equipment** section in this manual.

However, in spite of all precautions, pesticide accidents can still happen. Learn the signs of pesticide poisoning and know what to do in an emergency. Remember that the symptoms of a fatal pesticide poisoning can look like the flu or heat exhaustion. If someone has been working with pesticides and you see any possible symptoms of pesticide poisoning, take emergency action immediately. It is always better to be safe, than sorry. **Prompt action may save a life.**

Poison Information Centre



The Poison Information Centre number is listed in the front page of the telephone book - or you can dial "0" and ask the operator to connect you.

Ontario residents anywhere in the province can call the Poison Information Centre toll-free, 24 hours a day.

The Poison Information Centre in Ontario is located in Toronto at the Hospital for Sick Children. It provides information on all types of poisonings, including pesticide poisonings:

(416) 813-5900

1-800-268-9017

Advice is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Poison Information Centre provides “one window” service in Ontario to deal with poisoning emergencies. Poison Information Centre staff can:

- ▶ provide specific treatment and referral recommendations
- ▶ decide whether an ambulance is needed
- ▶ pass on information to paramedics and to your hospital while the victim is being transported by ambulance
- ▶ make calls to the pesticide manufacturer, CANUTEC and other organizations if more information is needed about the pesticide.

Read The Label



First Aid information is available on every pesticide label. The details and location of first aid information will change for each pesticide, so be sure you read each label carefully.

- ▶ **Read the First Aid section of the label before you begin to handle any pesticide.**
- ▶ **Show someone else the First Aid label information and the PCPA Registration number**, before you begin to handle the product. This number will be important if you need to contact the Poison Information Centre in case of an accident.
- ▶ **Take the label or container with you** if you take a pesticide poisoning victim to the hospital. Remember not to put the pesticide container in the passenger compartment for transport.
- ▶ **Provide the label or container to emergency personnel** when you reach the hospital or if they come to the accident scene. The **PCPA** registration number identifies the product. Some product manufacturers list a 24 hour emergency number on the label.

First Aid Treatment for Pesticide Accidents

First Aid is the help that you can give at the scene, until the victim receives professional medical help.

If you have another person available to help, send them to call for emergency help immediately, while you begin these first aid steps:

1. Always protect yourself from injury first.

Don't become another victim. Always put on protective clothing and personal protective equipment before you enter a contaminated area or handle a contaminated victim.

2. Check to see if the victim is conscious.

If the victim is not conscious call Paramedic Services (Emergency Medical Services) right away.

3. Check to see if the victim is breathing.

If the victim is not breathing:

- ▶ Straighten the victim's airway and check for breaths.
- ▶ If the victim does not begin to breathe, administer mouth-to-mouth rescue breathing until the victim begins to breathe on his/her own.
- ▶ Do not contaminate yourself, especially if the victim has pesticide or vomit around his face or mouth. Use a protective airway device with a one way valve. Do not breathe the exhaled air from the victim.
- ▶ Perform CPR if the victim's pulse disappears. You should only perform CPR if you are trained to do so.

If the victim is breathing, but unconscious:

- ▶ Place the victim in the recovery position (on the side with the head turned slightly to one side). If the victim vomits, try to keep the airway clear.

4. Stop the exposure to the pesticide.

Move the victim away from the contaminated area. Remove all contaminated clothing. Use soap and water to wash any skin exposed to the pesticide.

5. Call the Poison Information Centre - don't waste time.

If you don't have all the facts of the accident, call anyway and tell the Poison Information Centre whatever you can.

If you do know the details of the accident, try to give these basic facts:

- ▶ **What pesticide is it?** Look for the label, container or left-over pesticide. Have the **PCPA** registration number ready if you can.
- ▶ **How much** product was the victim exposed to?
- ▶ **How did the pesticide enter the body?** Did it enter through the mouth, skin/eyes or lungs?
- ▶ **When?** How much time has passed since the victim was exposed to the pesticide, and how long was the exposure? Were the symptoms immediate or did they occur as a result of using the pesticide over a longer period of time?

6. Start the First Aid Treatment

Start the First Aid treatment appropriate for the route of entry as advised by the Poison Information Centre or the label.

7. Make sure the patient gets medical attention if needed.

First aid is **not** a substitute for professional medical help. The Poison Information Centre will tell you what medical follow up is needed.

General First Aid Guidelines

The first aid treatment you use will depend on the route of entry of the pesticide. The victim may have taken it in through the skin or eyes (dermal exposure), breathed the pesticide into the lungs (inhalation), or swallowed it (oral ingestion).

Always check the label of the product the victim was exposed to for extra first aid directions.

The following information will help you deal with pesticide accidents. These are general guidelines only. Always call the Poison Information Centre for specific treatment and referral recommendations.

If Pesticide Contacts Skin

Remove contaminated clothing and rinse skin with plenty of water.

- ▶ Wash skin, hair, nails, and underneath nails thoroughly with lots of soap and water. Repeat.
- ▶ Dry victim and wrap him/her in a blanket or other clean material.
- ▶ Contact the Poison Information Centre. The Poison Information Centre staff will tell you about symptoms you should watch for and will tell you if you need to go for medical attention.
- ▶ Watch the victim carefully for signs of severe allergic reaction that may lead to anaphylactic shock.

Signs and symptoms of severe allergic reactions include:

- ▶ swelling of the lips, ears, hands and/or feet
- ▶ redness of the skin over the body such as a raised, itchy, blotchy rash (hives)
- ▶ weakness, dizziness
- ▶ breathing difficulty, coughing and wheezing that can progress to an obstructed airway as the tongue and throat swell.

Call Paramedic Services (Emergency Medical Services) immediately if the victim has any breathing difficulty or complains that his/her throat is closing.

For Chemical Burns on Skin

Remove the chemical immediately to stop the burning. Do not wait for clothing to be removed.

- ▶ Brush dry chemicals off skin and clothes and away from the victim, then rinse the affected area with lots of water.
- ▶ For liquid chemicals, rinse affected area with large amounts of water.
- ▶ Keep flooding the area with water while removing the victim's clothing. Do not remove clothing that is stuck to the skin.
- ▶ Immerse the burned area in cold water or cover with an ice pack.
- ▶ Cover with a loosely applied clean cloth.
- ▶ Get medical attention.

Do Not: touch the burned area
remove clothing stuck to the skin
break blisters
use ointments or lotions.

If Pesticide Contacts Eyes

Hold the victim's eyelids open and wash the eyes with large amounts of clean, lukewarm, running water.

- ▶ Wash for fifteen minutes or more.
- ▶ Contact the Poison Information Centre. The Poison Information Centre staff will tell you about symptoms you should watch for and will tell you if you need to go for medical attention.

If Pesticide Was Inhaled (dusts, vapours, gases)

Move the victim to fresh air.

- ▶ Loosen tight clothing and remove any clothing contaminated with pesticide. Pesticide on the clothing may harm the rescuer as well as the victim.
- ▶ Give mouth to mouth rescue breathing if the victim is not breathing.
Caution: If the victim's face or mouth has pesticide or vomit on it, protect yourself when you perform artificial respiration, if possible use a protective airway device with a one-way valve. Do not breathe the exhaled air from the victim.
- ▶ Contact the Poison Information Centre. The Poison Information Centre staff will tell you about symptoms you should watch for and will tell you if you need to go for medical attention.

If Pesticide Entered the Mouth but Was Not Swallowed

Call the Poison Information Centre immediately.

- ▶ If the victim is conscious and not convulsing, rinse the mouth with large quantities of water. Wipe the mouth with a damp cloth and brush teeth thoroughly.

If Pesticide Was Swallowed

Call the Poison Information Centre immediately.

Some pesticide labels may give directions to cause vomiting if the pesticide has been swallowed. However, do NOT do this unless a medical person or someone at the Poison Information Centre tells you to do so. In some situations, it may be dangerous to cause the victim to vomit.

Never Induce Vomiting if:

- ▶ The victim is unconscious or in a coma.
- ▶ The victim is in convulsions.
- ▶ The victim has a known heart condition.
- ▶ The victim is pregnant.
- ▶ The victim swallowed a pesticide containing petroleum products such as an Emulsifiable Concentrate. If these pesticides are aspirated (inhaled into the lungs during vomiting) it will cause respiratory distress and possibly death.
- ▶ The victim has swallowed a corrosive poison (strong acid or base/alkaline products). Strong acids and bases/alkalines will burn the throat and mouth. They will also damage the lungs if the victim aspirates during vomiting.
- ▶ The victim has swallowed any pesticide belonging to one of the following pesticide classifications:
 - ▶ **chlorinated hydrocarbons**
(also called organochlorine insecticides)
for example, endosulfan (THIODAN)
 - ▶ **organophosphorus insecticides**
for example, diazinon, azinphos-methyl (GUTHION)
 - ▶ **carbamates**
for example, carbaryl (SEVIN), bendiocarb (TRUMPET)
 - ▶ **concentrated dinitrophenols**
for example, dinoseb

Induce (cause) vomiting ONLY under the direction of a medical person or the Poison Information Centre.

If the victim does vomit and you don't know what the poison is, be sure to collect some of the vomit for the doctor.

Be Prepared



Learn how to use pesticides safely to prevent accidents - and always be prepared for an emergency.

- ▶ **Read the label** before you use any pesticide product. Pay special attention to the product name, the **PCPA** registration number, the guarantee, the precautions and the first aid section. Be sure you know the signs of poisoning for the products you are using.
- ▶ **Let someone else know - when, what, and where...** Be sure that someone always knows when you are working with pesticides and how long you expect to be. Make sure that they know what products you are using, and where you are working with them. If you do not return at the expected time someone can then check to see if you have had an accident.
- ▶ **Post emergency telephone numbers** near all telephones and near the pesticide storage area.
- ▶ **Carry a cell phone and emergency telephone numbers** if you are working in a remote area.
- ▶ **Keep plenty of clean water, soap and paper towels** close by when you work with pesticides.
- ▶ **Keep extra gloves and clean coveralls handy** in case you spill pesticide onto your clothing.
- ▶ **Take a First Aid Course and a CPR Course.** In most communities, Canadian Red Cross and St. John Ambulance offer courses to help you prepare for any kind of emergency. You can also ask your doctor or the local hospital for information.

Farms can be hazardous workplaces and many farms are located some distance away from a hospital or paramedic service. Take training and be prepared to respond if a medical emergency or accident happens. Also, carry a protective airway device with you.

Review Questions



1. When a pesticide accident occurs and you must enter the contaminated area, what is the **first** thing you should do?

2. If a pesticide contacts your eyes, what should you do?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

3. If a pesticide spills onto your arm, you should:
 - a) remove contaminated clothing and bandage your arm and apply a cold compress.
 - b) rinse contaminated clothing and skin with plenty of water.
 - c) rinse contaminated clothing and cover your skin with lotion or ointment.
 - d) remove contaminated clothing and wash skin thoroughly with lots of soap and water.

4. For chemical burns on the skin, wash the affected area with large amounts of water, then use ointment, grease or powder on the burns.

TRUE

FALSE

5. List the proper first aid procedures you should follow when you help a victim who has breathed in pesticide dusts, vapours or gases.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6. You would induce vomiting if the victim had swallowed a petroleum product.

TRUE

FALSE

