An agricultural chemical spill is any accidental release of a pesticide or fertilizer.

Reporting Agrichemical Spills

Most spills must be reported to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at 1-800-943-0003.

While not required, you may want to report the spill to the Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection spills coordinator at (608) 224-4518. Reporting the spill to DATCP will initiate department assistance in cleaning up the spill.

Spill Management

It can be difficult to stop large leaks or spills. Even a minor spill can endanger you, other people, and the environment if not handled correctly. Avoid leaving the spill unattended. When in doubt, get assistance.

The faster you contain, absorb, and dispose of a spill, you lessen the chance that it will cause harm. Clean up most spills immediately and clean up all spills before the end of the work day to keep unprotected persons or animals from exposure.

When a spill emergency occurs, remember the "three C's": Control, Contain, and Cleanup.

Control the Spill

• Protect yourself

Before you contact the spill or breathe the fumes, wear the appropriate personal protective equipment for the product spilled.

• Stop the source

If a small container is leaking, place it into a larger chemical-resistant container such as a plastic drum or bag. If a burst or tipped over container is too heavy to be righted, you may not be able to stop the source.

• Protect others

Isolate the spill site and keep children, other unprotected people and animals far enough away to protect them from drift, smoke, fumes or explosion. Rope off the site if necessary. Do not use road flares or allow anyone to smoke if you suspect the leaking material is flammable.

• Stay at the site

Remain at the spill site until another knowledgeable and correctly protected person arrives. Someone should stay at the site until the spill is cleaned up.

Contain The Spill

• Confine the spill

As soon as the source of the leak is under control, work quickly to limit the spread of the spill. You can often use a shovel, rake, or other tool or equipment to make a dike of soil, sod, or absorbent material.

• Protect water sources

Keep the spill out of any water body or any pathway that will lead to water, such as a ditch, floor drain, well, or sinkhole. If the spilled product flows toward such an area, block the area off or redirect the spill.

• Recover and/or absorb liquids

To further contain liquid agrichemical spills, use a pump or other tools to recover as much of the free product as possible. If recovery is not possible, cover the entire spill site with inorganic absorbent materials, such as fine sand, vermiculite, clay, kitty litter, or oil-dry.

• Cover dry materials

To prevent dry agrichemical spills, such as dusts, powders, or granules, from becoming airborne, cover them with a plastic covering until they can be recovered.

Clean Up The Spill

After you have contained the spill, pick up the spilled material and decontaminate the spill site and any contaminated items or equipment.

• Clean up the spill

Following product recovery, add absorbent material to soak up any remaining spilled liquid. Sweep up the contaminated absorbent material and collect it for future disposal or landspreading.

• Decontaminate the spill site

Collect as much of the spilled material as possible then decontaminate the spill site as well as you can. Do not hose down the site with water unless the spill is on a containment tray or pad.

Non-porous surface: If the product has spilled on a non-porous surface such as sealed concrete, glazed ceramic tile, or no-wax flooring, use water (or the chemical listed on the label to dilute pesticides) and a strong detergent to remove the spill residues from the surface. Do not allow any of the wash solution to run off-site. Soak up wash solution with fresh absorbent material. Sweep up the contaminated absorbent material and collect it for future disposal or landspreading.

Porous surface: If the product has spilled on a porous surface such as unsealed wood or carpet, you may have to remove the contaminated surface for disposal.

Contaminated Soils: The most common spills involve the excavation of agrichemical contaminated soils. Excavate and stockpile all agrichemical contaminated soils for future disposal or landspreading. Obtain soil samples from the base of the excavated site and send them to a DNR certified laboratory for analysis to confirm that all spilled agrichemicals have been removed from the soil.

If the samples show a significant amount of product remains in the soils at the spill site, further excavation and stockpiling of contaminated soil will be necessary.

If the spill site and excavation are not along a road or highway, you may wish to keep the excavation site open while the lab analyzes the soil samples. This allows easier access for additional excavation if necessary. Take safety precautions to protect people and animals.

When the samples show no significant levels of product remain in the soil at the spill site, backfill the excavation.

Decontaminate equipment: Clean all contaminated vehicles and equipment on a containment pad using a strong mixture of chlorine bleach, dishwasher detergent, and water. Wash personal protective equipment following manufacturers' instructions. Separately wash and dry clothing worn during the spill response from other laundry. Porous materials, such as brooms, leather shoes and clothing, cannot be cleaned effectively if they are thoroughly saturated with agrichemicals and may need to be disposed as hazardous waste.

Decontaminate yourself: When you are done with the spill and equipment cleanup, wash yourself thoroughly with detergent and water.

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Cleaning Up Agricultural Chemicals

for your information...

ACCP
Agricultural Chemical Cleanup Program

Agrichemical Spill Response