

Important points to note

ONLY use pesticides if necessary and as part of an integrated pest management strategy. Consider non-chemical methods instead or in tandem with pesticides.

Consult a registered Pesticide Advisor.

ALWAYS read and follow the product label.

If a buffer zone is indicated on the label, there is a legal requirement to comply with it. This applies to all types of surface water bodies regardless of whether or not the water body is used to supply drinking water.

RESPECT statutory no-use zones (safeguard zones) around drinking water abstraction points.

These range from 5 metres to 200 metres depending on the size of the supply. Your Local Authority or The National Federation of Group Water Schemes can advise on this. Safeguard zones are mandatory around drinking water abstraction points but they are not indicated on product labels.

REMEMBER!

- 💧 A **SINGLE** drop of pesticide lost to a water body such as a typical small stream (1m wide, 0.3m deep), for example, can be enough to breach the legal limit for pesticides in drinking water of 0.1 part per billion along 30km of its length.
- 💧 Always read and follow the product label.
- 💧 Be aware of how near water bodies (ditches, streams, ponds, rivers, lakes and springs) are to where you are working.
- 💧 Find out if the treatment area is in the vicinity of a drinking water abstraction point or well.

A **SINGLE** drop of herbicide can breach the drinking water limit in a small stream for 30 km

For further information on related topics such as container storage, triple rinsing, Integrated Pest Management or a list of approved Pesticide Advisors visit:

www.pcs.agriculture.gov.ie, www.teagasc.ie or www.epa.ie

Protecting Drinking Water from Pesticides

Advice for Farmers and Other Professional Users

Promoting best practice in the use of pesticides to protect drinking water



Pesticides* and drinking water

Drinking water monitoring results for Ireland show that a number of commonly used pesticides are being detected more frequently in recent years. Careless storage, handling or use of pesticides, or improper disposal of empty pesticide containers, can easily cause breaches of the legal limit for pesticides in drinking water.

It is essential to take great care and follow best practice procedures when using any pesticide.

How do pesticides get into drinking water?

Pesticides can enter water bodies from:

- **Point sources** – leaks from storage areas; spills or drips from handling operations such as mixing, filling and washing equipment; or
- **Diffuse sources** – releases that occur during or after application, such as spray drift, runoff or drainage inputs.

Water bodies are particularly vulnerable to runoff or washoff inputs from hard or compacted surfaces.



* Pesticides is a broad term which encompasses various types of pest control agents including herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, seed dressings and rodenticides.

DOs when using pesticides:

- DO** read the product label instructions carefully and plan the treatment in advance, taking care to ensure strict compliance with the specified conditions of use. Follow all health and safety instructions.
- DO** inform yourself of the location of all nearby water bodies (ditches, streams, ponds, rivers, lakes and springs).
- DO** find out if any groundwater body or surface water body in your locality is used as a drinking water source and, if so, the location of the nearest abstraction point. Ensure compliance with the safeguard (no-use) zones around drinking water abstraction points.
- DO** ensure that the pesticide products are stored in a secure, dry area which cannot result in accidental releases to drains, wells or water courses.
- DO** ensure that any pesticide application equipment used is properly calibrated and in good working order.
- DO** take every precaution during mixing and preparation of pesticides for application to avoid spills and drips. Minimise water volumes (rain and washings) on the handling area.
- DO** consider using drift-reducing nozzles if spraying. Keep the spray boom as low as possible to the ground and use the coarsest appropriate spray quality.
- DO** clean and wash down application equipment at the end of the day, preferably in the field and well away from water bodies or open drains. Tank washings should be sprayed onto a previously sprayed area, on a section far away from any water body, observing the maximum dose for that area.

DOs when using pesticides:

- DO** ensure that empty, triple-rinsed containers and foil caps are disposed of in accordance with the Good Practice Guide for Empty Pesticide Containers.

DON'Ts when using pesticides:

- DON'T** fill application equipment directly from a water body.
- DON'T** perform handling operations (filling, mixing or washing the sprayer) near water bodies, open drains or well heads. A distance of at least 10 metres should be maintained and preferably 50 metres, where possible.
- DON'T** spray if the target area is wet or if heavy rain is forecast within 48 hours after application.
- DON'T** apply pesticides during windy conditions.
- DON'T** apply pesticides near open drains, wells or springs.
- DON'T** apply pesticides on waterlogged or poorly draining soils that slope steeply towards a water body or on any other vulnerable area that leads directly to water.
- DON'T** apply pesticides if field drains are flowing.
- DON'T** discard washings from application equipment down a drain or onto an area from which they can readily enter a water body.