

Pesticide Containers: Management & Disposal

This factsheet was prepared by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to provide guidance to those persons who handle and store small package pesticide and fertilizer at their facilities. This guidance is intended to supplement - not replace - Federal and State laws and rules.

Proper management of pesticide containers (full and empty) requires forethought and planning. Removal of the product from the container does not end the need for special management of that container. The appropriate handling, rinsing, storage and disposal of empty pesticide containers can prevent future health, environmental and regulatory problems. These "Guidelines" are to assist pesticide users in developing a management plan for empty pesticide containers.

Container Management

The best plan for managing empty pesticide containers is to triple or pressure rinse containers immediately after emptying. By rinsing containers immediately, you can:

- Utilize all the product.
- Use the rinsate with the application of the product.
- Prevent storage and rinsing problems. Empty Pesticide Containers

Unrinsed Pesticide Containers

- Empty, un-rinsed pesticide containers must be capped, stored upright in a roofed or covered secure (locked) area and on an impervious surface.
- Unrinsed pesticide containers must be stored separate from pesticide containers that have been properly rinsed.
- Rinsing empty pesticide containers after the contents have dried may require additional steps and/or the use of cleansing material to insure containers are free of pesticide and pesticide residue.

Properly Rinsed Pesticide Containers

- Clean, empty pesticide containers are those that have been properly pressure-rinsed or triple rinsed. There should be no visible or noticeable residue on either the inside or outside of the container.
- All rinsate should be removed from the inside of the container following rinsing procedures.
- Rinsates generated from rinsing empty pesticide containers must be used on a site that is consistent with the label instructions.
- Empty containers meeting the above criteria can be stored until they can be properly disposed of or recycled.

Storage

Triple or pressure rinsed pesticide containers should be stored separate from the regular pesticide storage area (preferably indoors), and separate from unrinsed pesticide containers. Container storage locations should be managed so unrinsed containers are not placed with properly rinsed containers.

Accepting Containers from Clientele

Minnesota Statutes 18B.135 requires a person distributing or selling pesticides must accept properly rinsed empty pesticide containers from the pesticide end user if no organized empty pesticide container-recycling program is available in the county.

Retailers must institute procedures to insure containers brought onto their premises for recycling are:

- Inspected for cleanliness prior to being accepted.
- Stored with other clean containers ready to be recycled (only if the container is also clean).
- Secured in a separate storage location to insure that unrinsed containers are not added during off hours (preferably inside a locked building or fenced area to prevent unauthorized entry).

Dealers should establish a specific time of the year and specific days and hours to have personnel available to inspect rinsed pesticide containers prior to acceptance.

Disposal

Disposal can only occur after containers are properly rinsed.

Do not recycle empty pesticide containers through a curbside or recycling center program for plastics.

Disposal options include:

- Recycle – at an active container collection site; or
- Landfill – if the landfill will accept the containers.

Empty Pesticide Containers

Unrinsed pesticide containers found at an agricultural firm during a Minnesota Department of Agriculture pesticide facility inspection are the responsibility of the firm. Unrinsed pesticide containers that are not properly stored could result in enforcement action.

Further Information

Pesticide Container Recycling Program

www.mda.state.mn.us/empty-pesticide-container-recycling-program

Disposal of Old Pesticide Containers (Guidance Document 4)

www.mda.state.mn.us/guidance-document-4-disposal-old-pesticide-containers

For detailed information contact: your pesticide retailer or the MDA at 651-201-6136.