



# COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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## SAFE DISPOSAL OF PESTICIDES AND CONTAINERS IN COLORADO

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This fact sheet describes how to safely dispose of pesticides and containers in Colorado.

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## Safe Disposal of Pesticides and Containers in Colorado

Proper pesticide waste disposal of pesticides and empty pesticide containers is the responsibility of pesticide users. Improper disposal can result in serious harm to humans, pets, wildlife, and the environment. Even if the smallest available container of a pesticide is purchased, there likely will be times when it is necessary to dispose of the pesticide product.

### What is a pesticide waste?

A pesticide waste is any material which contains any concentration of pesticides that are no longer desirable. This includes such things as:

- rinse material from containers and spray equipment
- left over spray solutions
- excess pesticides
- canceled/suspended pesticides



### How should I dispose of rinse water?

Improperly disposed rinse water from application equipment has great potential for causing ground and surface water contamination.

- Spray rinse water on the target area just treated, if application rates and amounts will not be exceeded
- Apply rinse water to other areas listed on the product label, if allowed by product label restrictions (see Pesticide Fact Sheet [The Pesticide Label](#)).
- Reuse rinse water to dilute the next batch of formulation, as long as the site to which the rinse water is applied is a labeled site
- Do not bury or discharge rinse water to the ground, septic systems, ditches or streams

### If I have left over spray solution, how should I dispose of it?

The way to “dispose” of excess spray solutions is to use all of the mixed pesticide in accordance with label instructions. Make sure that application rates and amounts are not exceeded. Avoid the problem of excess mixture by measuring and calibrating carefully. Fill your spray tank with only the amount required to do the job.

### How should I dispose of excess pesticide product?

Assuming you have the pesticide product in the original, properly labeled container that is no longer needed, you may:

- Contact other possible users of the pesticide to see if they have a need for it. Do not give restricted use pesticides to

- people that are not certified to apply them.
- Use the product up according to the pesticide label on the container.
  - Utilize the [Colorado ChemSweep Pesticide Waste Collection Program](#) to dispose of unwanted pesticides.
  - Contact a commercial waste hauler or collector.

### **How should I dispose of pesticides that have been banned, canceled, or suspended?**

Assuming you have pesticide product in the original, properly labeled container that is no longer legal to use, you may:

- Check to see if there is a recall program for your pesticide. If the pesticide registration was recently canceled, there may be a recall program available. The pesticide registrant may collect the pesticide for disposal.
- If legal, use the product up according to the pesticide label on the container. Pesticides for which the labeled uses have changed, or pesticides that have been taken off the market can usually be used until supplies are exhausted. For most pesticides that you have had for a number of years, you can legally use up the pesticide according to the pesticide label. However, there are exceptions to the rule: For some pesticides, the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) allows old label uses for only a short time after a product cancellation or label change. In rare cases, EPA may issue a “stop use” on a product at the time of its cancellation. Contact the pesticide manufacturer to find out whether you can still use a particular product.
- Utilize the Colorado ChemSweep Pesticide Waste Collection Program to dispose of unused, banned, or outdated pesticides.
- If the product is an agricultural pesticide that has been recalled or banned from use, is obsolete, has become damaged, or is no longer needed due to changes in cropping patterns or other factors, it is considered a hazardous waste known as a “universal waste.” Wastes from non-residential sources that are “universal wastes” may be disposed of in a solid waste landfill under the [Universal Waste Rule](#) (see Pesticide Fact Sheet [Disposal of Hazardous Waste Pesticides in Colorado](#)).
- Contact a commercial waste hauler or collector.

### **What if I do not dispose of pesticides in one of the previously mentioned ways?**

Excess pesticide and rinsates that cannot be used must be disposed of as hazardous waste (see Pesticide Fact Sheet [Disposal of Hazardous Waste Pesticides in Colorado](#)). A hazardous waste is a solid, liquid, or a contained gaseous material that is no longer used or that no longer serves the purpose for which it was produced, and could pose dangers to human health and the environment after it is discarded. Household wastes, including homeowner pesticides, are exempt from [Colorado hazardous waste regulations](#).

Treating and disposing of hazardous waste is expensive and carries with it serious legal responsibilities. People who create or generate hazardous waste must follow many state and federal rules and requirements, including:

- identifying all hazardous waste generated
- obtaining and using an EPA identification number
- packaging, labeling, marking, and placarding wastes
- keeping accurate records for a minimum of three years

- ensuring that wastes meet treatment standards prior to disposal

### **How should I dispose of empty pesticide containers?**

#### **When using containers holding liquid formulations:**

After empty pesticide containers are triple rinsed, they are no longer considered hazardous waste and usually may be disposed of as trash in a sanitary landfill, operated by the city or county. Triple rinse the container immediately after emptying:

- Empty the product into the spray tank and allow the container to drain for 30 seconds.
- Add rinse water to the container until it is 1/4 full.
- Rinse the container thoroughly. Pour rinsate into spray tank and drain for 30 seconds.
- Repeat 3 times.
- Puncture triple rinsed containers at both ends to assure they are empty.



#### **When using containers holding dry formulations (bags and boxes):**

Empty bags should be accepted for disposal at a licensed sanitary landfill.

- Completely empty the contents of the container into the spray tank.
- Open both ends of the container to help remove any remaining pesticide and to prevent reuse of the container.

#### **When using containers holding aerosol formulations:**

- Relieve pressure as much as possible.
- Do not puncture the container.

### **Farmer's Exemption**

If you are a farmer disposing of waste pesticides from your own use which are hazardous wastes, you are not required to comply with the [Colorado Hazardous Waste Regulations 6 CCR 1007-3](#) for those wastes provided you triple rinse each emptied pesticide container and dispose of the pesticide residues on your own farm in a manner consistent with the disposal instruction on the pesticide label.

### **Guidelines to safely store and dispose of waste pesticides:**

- **Inventory all pesticides.** Look in areas where pesticides may have been replaced or forgotten and keep a written list. "Out of sight, out of mind" is commonly associated with pesticide storage. Inspect your inventory for pesticides that cannot be used. Secure all labels with tape. Correct identification of pesticides is important for proper disposal (see Pesticide Fact Sheet [Proper Pesticide Storage](#)).
- **Try to identify any unlabeled products.** Clearly label the pesticides you can identify. If you cannot identify the contents, label the container "Unknown Pesticide."
- **Check the condition of the waste pesticide containers.** Look for rusted or brittle areas and small leaks along the container seams. Paper containers may have weak places or holes, particularly if the containers have been wet. Place leaking containers in a storage drum. The drum should be metal or plastic and in good condition. Place some absorbent material (e.g., cat litter or sand) in the bottom of the drum to absorb pesticide that may leak from the damaged container. Dry pesticide products can be placed in heavy-duty trash bags. Label each new container with the pesticide name.
- **Avoid accidental use of the waste pesticides.** Clearly label all containers and drums. Always store waste pesticides separately from usable products. Alert all employees to the location of the waste pesticide storage area and instruct them not to use waste pesticides.

- **Store all pesticides securely.** Lock them away to prevent access to children or irresponsible people. Post signs that clearly indicate there are pesticides stored inside (see Pesticide Fact Sheet [Pesticide Security](#)).

### **How NOT to handle pesticides!**

- DO NOT pour pesticides down the drain, curb, or into water
- DO NOT pour pesticides on the ground
- DO NOT discard pesticides in desolate areas
- DO NOT burn excess pesticides
- DO NOT use pesticides for other than their labeled uses
- DO NOT sell excess pesticides unless you are licensed to do so
- DO NOT store pesticides in anything except the original container
- DO NOT reuse pesticide containers
- DO NOT put rinsed pesticide containers in the household recycle bin

### **References and Resources**

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