

Chemical Safety Education for Children

Each year thousands of children are exposed to chemicals on the farm. Exposure can happen in a number of ways:

- ingestion by eating or swallowing
- contact with the skin
- contact with the eyes
- inhaling or breathing it into the lungs

By teaching children about the dangers of chemical exposure, you will help them understand the importance of avoiding contact. Younger children should be taught to stay away from all items which they are not familiar with and instructed about warning symbols. Older children can be taught the significance of warning symbols, words, colors and the distinctions between the levels of danger. Twenty-three of the fatalities to youth on the farm from 1982-1996, listed accidental poisoning as the cause of death. Seventeen deaths were males and six were females.

- **CAUTION** — The term “caution” is used for hazards that could result in minor or moderate injury or will alert against unsafe practices. Caution signs will often appear on a bright yellow background.
- **WARNING** — The term “warning” involves the possibility of death or serious injury if the hazard is not avoided. Warning signs will often appear on a bright orange background.
- **DANGER** — The term “danger” is the highest level and is to be used where there is a high probability of death or serious injury if the hazard is not avoided. Danger signs will often appear on a bright red background.

If chemicals are stored in appealing or common containers such as pop bottles or measuring cups, children may be attracted to them and disaster can occur if children drink from these containers. Many chemicals also look like other nontoxic substances. For example, gasoline could look like a juice drink or motor oil may look like pancake syrup to a child. Numerous injuries have occurred to children, especially young ones who cannot read, when they have ingested the wrong substance by mistake.

To prevent accidental exposure to chemicals follow these guidelines:

- Always keep pesticides in locked storage and in their original, labeled, container.
- Instruct children about warning signs and items they should stay away from.
- Be a good role model when using chemicals by using proper protective clothing.
- Discard all empty chemical containers and measuring utensils properly.
- Remove children and toys from the area when applying chemicals.
- Keep the telephone number of the poison control center close to the phone and instruct children about proper emergency procedures.
- Wash chemical-soiled clothing separate from the rest of the laundry.
- If interrupted while working with chemicals, close all containers and put out of reach of children.
- Farm chemicals are not for use by children or youth.

Protect children by keeping them away from farm chemicals!



Farm Safety



Just Kids