

Technical Bulletin #01:

Safe Disposal of Pesticide Containers

Pesticides benefit farmers by protecting crops and controlling pests that carry disease, but they can be dangerous if they are used and disposed of improperly. Improper disposal of pesticides or their containers can lead to environmental contamination of soil and water. Thus, farmers should safely dispose of pesticide containers by burying or burning them.

Below are the disposal methods for liquid formulation pesticide containers:

- Metal cans, glass bottles, and drums: wash out (triple rinse), puncture, crush, and bury them at least 50 meters from any water source. (Note: do not puncture or crush aerosol cans.)
- Paper, cardboard, plastic, or other packaging material: wash out (triple rinse), then burn or bury.



Triple rinse means rinsing the pesticide container three times with clean water. All used pesticide containers should be triple rinsed. The procedure is as follows:

- Empty the container by inverting the container over the spray or mixing tank and allow it to drain for at least 30 seconds, until the flow has slowed to a drip.
- Fill the empty container one-fifth to one-fourth full of water and to rinse thoroughly replace the cap and shake vigorously for 30 seconds.
- Drain the rinse into the mixing or spray tank, again by inverting the container over the spray or mixing tank and allowing it to drain for at least 30 seconds, until the flow has slowed to a drip.
- Use this rinse water as dilution water for the pesticide concentrate in the sprayer for applying on crops. Repeat the rinsing twice more.

After rinsing, as mentioned above, small containers may be disposed of at a public dump or buried at least half a meter deep at a private disposal site. To dispose, remove the cap or lid, punch holes in metal containers, and break glass containers. Do not use containers for storage of food, feed, or water for domestic consumption. The burning should be carried out where wind will not cause contaminated smoke to drift over nearby homes, people, livestock, crops, or the person doing this job.

Caution: Drums or bottles may be in the pile to be burned. Ensure that caps are removed or that containers are punctured to prevent explosions.

Remember: Proper rinsing and cleaning of empty pesticide containers is good farm practice and the first step in safe disposal!

Triple rinse method:



1. Empty the container into the sprayer



2. Fill the container 1/4 -1/5 full of water



3. Replace cap and shake container for 30 seconds



4. Repeat two more times, shaking container in different directions



5. Empty rinse water into sprayer



6. Spray the rinsings

Reference:

1. Guideline for the safe and effective use of pesticides. General Directorate of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 2009.
2. Guideline for the safe and effective use of crop protection. Crop life, 2004.

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