



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Code of Practice

Disposal of pesticide residues from pesticide spray applications

Version 3: November 2024

Acknowledgement of Country

WA Health acknowledges the Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Western Australia. It acknowledges the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present and pays respect to Aboriginal communities of today.

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Foreword

Inappropriate, and possibly illegal, disposal of excess pesticide mixture following spray applications is a major source of environmental contamination which can impact public health.

This Code of Practice provides options to the pest management industry on how to minimise creating excess pesticide mixture and how to dispose of any waste residue. The original code was developed in consultation with the pest management industry and relevant government agencies. This edition introduces minor updates.

The Pesticides Advisory Committee, established under the Health (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1911, has endorsed the Code and its use as a licence condition for all licensed pesticide management technicians and a condition of registration of registered pest management businesses.

Government agencies their employees and volunteers are also required to comply with the Code.

The Code has been endorsed by the delegate of the Chief Health Officer as an approved method of cleaning pesticide containers under Regulation 93 and its use as a licence condition for all licensed management technicians and a condition of registration of registered pest management businesses.

This Foreword does not form part of the Code.

Contents

Foreword	2
Contents	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Objective.....	4
3. Scope	4
4. Date of commencement.....	5
5. Relevant legislation.....	5
6. Definitions.....	5
7. Requirements to minimise pesticide residues.....	6
8. Pesticide rinsates	7

1. Introduction

Inappropriate disposal of excess pesticide mixtures into the environment is not an acceptable practice.

Environmental contamination from excess pesticide mixture results from:

- diluted spray from spray equipment
- rinsates from pesticide containers
- rinsates from cleaning pest management vehicles
- materials used to decontaminate pesticide spillage or leakage.

Diluted pesticide rinsates and materials contaminated with pesticides are not permitted to be discharged into unlined sumps, storm water drains, sewerage systems and vehicle yards. Such action can increase public health risks and cause ecological harm.

Pesticide residues from excess undiluted pesticide and rinsates or materials contaminated with pesticides shall always be disposed of in accordance with the registered label and the Health (Pesticides) Regulations 2011.

This Code provides options for minimising creation of excess pesticides by permitting the reuse of excess pesticide mixture.

The Code also encourages the development and adoption of new technology to reduce the production of excess pesticide mixture.

The Code encourages meeting standards or criteria rather than specified requirements. This should enable the pest management industry and others to develop new technology and systems to meet, and often exceed the standards of the Code

2. Objective

The objective of this Code of Practice is to lower the public health and environmental impacts from pesticides by minimising the waste from pesticide applications. Excess pesticides may remain in spray tanks and as rinsate from pesticide containers or from pest management vehicles.

3. Scope

This Code applies to:

- registered pest management businesses
- Government agencies
- licensed pest management technicians
- State and local government employees
- licensed water service providers

who use registered pesticides including herbicides, insecticides and fungicides by spray application.

4. Date of commencement

The requirements of the Code have applied since July 1994 with minor updates in 2001 and 2024.

5. Relevant legislation

Nothing in this Code supersedes or invalidates any legislation (including regulations) relating to the use or disposal of pesticides. If there is a conflict between the Code and legislation, then the legislation takes precedence.

The major pieces of relevant legislation are:

- *Public Health Act 2016*
- *Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1911* and the *Health (Pesticides) Regulations 2011*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1986*
- *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act 1909*
- *Country Areas Water Supply Act 1947*
- *Soil and Land Conservation Act 1945*
- *Waterways Conservation Act 1976*
- *Agricultural and Related Resources Protection Act 1976*
- *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*
- *Water Agencies (Powers) Act 1984*

6. Definitions

Contaminated

When the concentration of pesticide remaining in spray equipment or empty pesticide containers is greater than 0.01% of the concentration of the original pesticide concentrate.

Decontamination

The removal of pesticide contamination from spray equipment or used pesticide containers to reduce the concentration of any remaining pesticide to less than 0.01% of its original concentration.

Empty pesticide container

When the pesticide container has been drained of the pesticide concentrate for at least 30 seconds after the flow has reduced to drops.

Person

Includes corporate bodies and government agencies.

Pest management vehicle

Is a motor vehicle, trailer, boomspray, other mobile spray equipment or other mobile apparatus used to spray registered pesticides and which may become contaminated.

Pesticide concentrate

The original registered pesticide formulation as supplied by the pesticide manufacturer in its original container.

Excess pesticide mixture

Any pesticide contamination or residue remaining in “empty” pesticide containers or spray equipment.

Pesticide rinsate

Pesticide contained in liquid used to decontaminate by rinsing or washing containers and spray equipment.

Spray equipment

Every article associated with the spray application of pesticides including a pest management vehicle.

Soil residual herbicides

Any pesticide formulations that contain bromacil, ethidimuron, hexazonone, picloram, sulphonylureas or triazines excluding these herbicides, when used selectively at low rates in agricultural crop production.

7. Requirements to minimise pesticide residues

All persons shall ensure that excess pesticide mixtures resulting from pesticide spray applications are minimised. This shall be done as follows:

a) Pesticide containers

Unused pesticides and containers may be returned to the manufacturer/supplier or their nominated collection and disposal service.

Empty pesticide containers, which are to be disposed to a licensed landfill facility, shall be decontaminated immediately after use, in accordance with the requirements of this Code.

This requirement does not apply to containers that are being returned to the manufacturer for refilling.

Decontamination shall be achieved by either of the following methods:

- i. pressure rinsing with a proven system (including a flushing and suction probe). The manufacturer's instructions should be followed to ensure effective rinsing
- ii. containers of 5L or less may be triple rinsed.

Any liquid collected from the above decontamination process is regarded as pesticide rinsate. Options for the use of the pesticide rinsate are set out in Section 8.

b) Spraying equipment

All spraying equipment including tanks, pumps, hoses, filters and lances shall be decontaminated before a different class of pesticide is used or the equipment is stored.

Decontamination shall be achieved as instructed by the registered label and/or manufacturer. Any diluent from rinsing and/or flushing is regarded as pesticide rinsate.

c) Pest management vehicles

Decontamination or washing of pest management vehicles shall be performed as needed, or when spillage, leakage or spray drift onto the vehicle has occurred.

Pest management vehicle decontamination shall be performed only at the registered business premises, approved site or government depot by either:

8. Pesticide rinsates

Pesticide rinsates shall be used (recycled) whenever possible and in accordance with the registered label.

The contents of the pesticide rinsate containers shall be clearly labelled.

With the exception of organochlorines and soil residual herbicides, rinsates shall be disposed of according to the following hierarchy of options:

- a) Sprayed at the application site.
- b) Used as the diluent/solvent for the same active ingredient pesticide at a different application site. In this case the pesticide rinsate shall be added to the diluent at a rate not exceeding 10% of the total volume.
- c) Applied at a different site provided it is used in accordance with the registered label.
- d) Returned to the manufacturer/supplier or their nominated collection and disposal service.
- e) Disposed of at a liquid waste treatment plant subject to consent of the plant operator or a local authority.

Soil residual herbicide pesticide rinsates shall only be disposed of according to option a) and b) above.

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