

Pesticides and Storms

What to Do About Your Pesticides Before a Storm

Hurricanes and similar storms, including flooding and tornadic winds, can wreak havoc with agricultural operations. In addition to the disastrous effects that spring to mind, such severe weather events can cause both dollar loss and environmental pollution with respect to agricultural chemicals. Fertilizers, pesticides, solvents, fuels, etc. can be physically lost, contaminated themselves, or contaminate the surrounding environment and environments "downstream" of chemical storage and use areas.

If the time comes, you need to have a plan ready and know when to implement it. Here is some guidance that can be applied to any situations where pesticides and other chemicals are used and stored, e.g. farms, golf courses, mosquito control operations, nurseries, greenhouse operations, pest control firms, etc.

- ☛ **Be aware** of weather predictions on the morning, noon and evening news casts.
- ☛ **Do not delay action.** You need to take action **EARLY** to prepare for the potential of the hurricane now on the weather screen. And remember, others can follow.
- ☛ **Do an INVENTORY** of what pesticides and other chemicals you have on hand. Such an inventory will be useful for insurance purposes, or in the event of necessary pesticide or chemical clean ups. Include product and container sizes in your inventory. Receipts for the purchase of these materials are useful for this, or in some cases may suffice themselves.

- ☛ **Do the inventory NOW**, before you take other measures. Put the inventory in a safe location. In the case of large scale storms or flooding, it may be useful to make a copy of your inventory and mail or fax it to a friend or business associate that lives outside of the potentially affected area.
- ☛ **Do you know** where your **INSURANCE** policy is? Do you know exactly what kind of coverage you have? Does it cover your chemical inventory or the damage it could cause? Find out **NOW**. If you need to know later, your insurance agent may be very busy.



- ☛ **Consider not using** or making applications of agricultural chemicals, or at least holding off, until the potential of impending severe weather is resolved.
- ☛ **Delay purchase** or delivery of additional chemicals to your operation until after any impending storm risk is past. If you have any such deliveries scheduled for the coming week you may want to cancel them.
- ☛ **Secure all** of your chemicals. This includes fertilizers, pesticides, solvents, fuels, etc. Close and secure container lids, move containers and application equipment to the most secure location. Raise chemicals from the floor or cover materials that could be damaged by water. Do what you can to protect product labels and labeling. Doors, windows and other points of access to storage locations should be secured and locked. If you are going to board up windows on your house, do the same for pesticide and other chemical storage areas. Don't leave chemicals in vehicles, or in application equipment.
- ☛ **As you prepare** for a storm, as you hurry to put lots of things into secure locations, be sure all of these items are compatible. Don't, for instance, put pesticides and fuels in the same building with animals, or animal feeds.

- ☛ **NOW is the time to read** the storage and spill containment sections of your SDSs. Round up your pesticide and other chemical SDSs and put these in a secure location. And if you have not done so, provide local emergency first responders with a copy of these, along with a copy of your chemical inventory.
- ☛ **Secure** your personal protective equipment. You may need it as part of your own cleanup operations after the storm.
- ☛ **Be sure** that your buildings will stay where they are as much as possible! Are the roofs tied into the building? Can you tie down small storage buildings and storage tanks?
- ☛ **If you leave** your location during a severe weather event, be sure that buildings that store pesticides and other chemicals are well signed.
- ☛ **Have on hand** all emergency phone numbers you need.
- ☛ **Consult** your chemical dealer and insurance agent for additional suggestions, but do it soon.
- ☛ **Sit down NOW** and think about what you need to do to prepare for a storm. Think about what kinds of things you will need and may need to do after a storm. Write it all down. Get family members and others in your operation help with this. They may need to help later.

- ☛ **You may also want to read** the publication "Storm-Damaged Agricultural Facilities" (University of Florida). This fact sheet provides guidelines useful for persons or organizations needing to secure pesticides and other agricultural chemicals that have been subjected to severe storm conditions.

- ☛ For pesticide emergencies in South Carolina:

Phone numbers for the South Carolina Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR):

- Main office, Pendleton/
Clemson: 864-646-2150
- Columbia: 803-736-7680
- Florence (Pee Dee REC):
843-667-1393
- Charleston: 843-225-7062,
7063, 7065

The DPR has a complete DIRECTORY of their phone numbers on their web site www.clemson.edu/public/regulatory/pesticide_regulation/

The numbers of individual offices are also in the phone book under 'Clemson University'.

