



Pesticide Use: Ten Golden Rules

Recent changes in legislation and other challenges are highlighting the need for very best practice in weed, pest and disease control. This document sets out important rules about pesticide use. It is not comprehensive but aims to set out the key factors.

SOME GOLDEN RULES

1. **Get trained.** Users and anyone who causes or permits others to use pesticides have a legal obligation to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to protect human health and the environment. Users must be competent to apply products safely and, by law, other than in very limited circumstances, hold a relevant certificate when using professional products. A similar obligation to demonstrate competence applies to advisers. After 26 November 2015, anyone who is purchasing a professional product must ensure it will be used by someone who holds an appropriate certificate of competence.
2. **Carefully plan pest, weed and disease control strategies using a suitable advisor where necessary** Use of non-chemical methods of control or adopting an integrated approach (combining pesticide applications with non-chemical controls) may be appropriate and deliver an acceptable degree of control. It is good practice to only use pesticides where it is necessary to do so.
3. **Buy pesticides from reputable distributors.** This will minimise the risk, for example, of being sold counterfeit products. They should have trained staff available to advise on safe, proper and economic use of the product.
4. **Store pesticides correctly, use only authorised products and comply with conditions specified on the product label.** These are legal requirements. Similar products can be formulated differently, and so it is crucial that users read and understand how the product must be used. It is advisable to have trained and qualified storekeepers to ensure best practice.
5. **Maintain application equipment.** It is a legal requirement that certain types of application equipment are tested on a regular basis. All equipment must be regularly calibrated to help ensure that there is no under or over-dosing of pesticides and set correctly so that applications are confined to the target area.
6. **Minimise use.** Using the minimum amount of product necessary to control pests, weeds and diseases makes economic sense. It is also a legal requirement in: areas frequented by the public; conservation areas; and on certain transport infrastructure and sealed surfaces. All

herbicides approved for use on hard surfaces contain directions for use on the product label stating where the product can be applied. Application on hard surfaces must be targeted

7. **Protect workers and the public.** It is a legal requirement to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to protect human health when advising on, storing, handling or using pesticides. For example, employees must wear suitable protective equipment and may need their health monitoring. Also the product should not be allowed to drift onto neighbouring properties.
8. **Protect water.** It is a legal requirement to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to protect the environment when storing, handling or using pesticides. Particular care should be taken to avoid pollution of water. Users should determine whether they are in areas such as surface water safeguard zones or drinking water protected areas. You should also take account of weather conditions. Is the wind blowing at a level that may increase the risk of spray drift (a guide is more than 4mph)? Is it raining or forecast to rain within the next two days at a level which might result in the pesticide draining into watercourses? You need also to take account of surface type. Are you applying to a hard or permeable (soil/grass) surface? Are you taking account of the topography? All such factors are crucial in assessing risks when advising on, storing, handling and/or applying the pesticide.
9. **Check the guidance.** Government and industry bodies provide advice (in paper form and on the internet) to help ensure pesticides are used safely and sustainably and a key source is the Amenity Forum. However there is also a range of advice available in person and warding bodies can provide information on availability of suitably qualified and trained staff.
10. **Keep records.** It is a legal requirement for distributors and users to keep records of pesticide sales and use. Clear and accurate records play an important role on helping to assess the effectiveness of pesticide applications.

The Amenity Forum has a library of good practice guidance notes covering a range of these topics in more detail. These are available at www.amenityforum.co.uk. It is recommended that, at every level, everyone should operate at a standard equivalent to that required to become Amenity Assured. The Forum would also record their thanks to staff at the Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) for their assistance in the production of this document.

If you are an organisation involved in the amenity sector, consider becoming a member of the Amenity Forum, and help us to drive up standards. For further information contact the Forum Secretary, Alan.Spedding@amenityforum.co.uk