

Pesticide Use

This information sheet highlights rules related to discharges from pesticide applications under Section 77.1 of the [Code of Practice for Agricultural Environmental Management](#) (AEM Code).

Applying pesticides

When applying pesticides, all agricultural operators must incorporate a basic level of environmental protection.

This includes:

1. Preventing runoff contaminated with pesticides from entering watercourses, groundwater, or crossing property boundaries;
2. Ensuring pesticide spray drift does not enter watercourses or groundwater;
3. Taking precautions to prevent the unreasonable release of pesticide spray drift from crossing property boundaries; and,
4. Keeping records to show how you are meeting the requirements of the AEM Code.

Contaminated runoff is runoff that contains suspended or dissolved nutrients, pathogens or other substances after contact with agricultural by-products, leachate or other organic matter or pesticides.

Spray Drift is the airborne movement of spray droplets away from a treatment site during application.

Ways to Minimize Impacts from Pesticide Use

Spray drift and contaminated runoff can damage sensitive crops on neighbouring properties, contaminate water, and be a hazard to people and animals. Help keep surface water and groundwater free of contaminants and safeguard the health of your family, neighbours and animals by following practices that reduce the potential for the unreasonable release of pesticides that may cause harm:

- Follow the pesticide label – pesticide labels are legal documents and must be followed;
 - information on the pesticide label identifies proper storage, handling, application, and disposal; and,
 - only use pesticides that are labeled for the intended crop and pest.
1. Monitor the weather –
 - Use a wind meter to check wind speed. The greater the wind speed, the greater the chance of spray drift.
 - Track temperature and humidity. High temperatures coupled with low relative humidity cause pesticide droplets to become smaller, which increases the potential for drift.
 2. Use the right application method and rate –
 - Calibrate – calibrate equipment before applying pesticides, as proper calibration of equipment can minimize spray drift.
 - Nozzles – use the proper nozzle for the job. Nozzle selection has the greatest influence on droplet size, and low-drift nozzles are designed to produce larger spray droplets with less drift.
 - Spray pressure – use the right spray pressure for your nozzle, as lower pressure produces larger droplets.
 - Boom height – use lower spray boom heights to keep nozzles as close to the target as possible. The less distance between the nozzle and target, the less likely the spray is to drift.

3. Identify sensitive areas on and around your property and talk to you neighbours –
 - Know what the adjacent properties are used for – is it residential? Is there a school, park, store, road or walking path? Are there different crops than the ones you are spraying and are they sensitive to the pesticide you are using? Are there watercourses or drinking water sources?
 - Have a conversation with your neighbours, so that they can identify any areas of concern they may have.
 - Leave buffer zones as required by the label.
4. Plant a vegetative barrier –
 - A tall hedge row or climbing vine on a fence located on the property boundary will help reduce drift across the property.

Keep Records

Keeping records of pesticide application activities will help show that you are meeting the requirements of the AEM Code. Required records are:

- The date, time, and location of application;
- The temperature, precipitation, wind speed and wind direction at the time of application;
- The name of targeted pest; and,
- For each pesticide applied:
 - The product trade name and pest control product registration number.
 - The application method and rate of application.

Keep **records** of your farm activities for at least five years and provide them within five business days if requested.

You may also want to record how you calibrated your equipment, which nozzles were used, what the spray angle and spray pressure were, and the travel speed.

Keeping detailed records demonstrates good pesticide application management practices, helps for future applications, and assists environmental protection officers in determining compliance. When an officer is inspecting whether pesticide spray drift has occurred, and deciding if it is reasonable or unreasonable, they will review the application process, including whether or not the pesticide label was followed; the weather was suitable; the equipment was calibrated; the nozzle, pressure and boom height were appropriate; and if mitigation factors to minimize impacts were considered and implemented such as being aware of what adjacent properties are used for and modifying your application; planting vegetative barriers or installing a solid fence.

Pesticide application resources

For the public and agriculture

- [Using pesticides safely](#)
- [Pesticides in agriculture](#)
- [Berry Spray Drift \(PDF, 175KB\)](#)
- [Orchard and Vine Spray Drift Management \(PDF, 175KB\)](#)
- [Herbicide Drift on Grapes \(PDF, 558KB\)](#)

For schools

- [Pesticide Drift Management Around Schools \(PDF, 4.3MB\)](#)
- [Pesticide Drift Management Around Schools - Punjabi \(PDF, 1.8MB\)](#)

Looking for more information on the AEM Code?

Website: gov.bc.ca/Agricultural-Environmental-Management

Email: AEMCoPenquiries@gov.bc.ca

Disclaimer: The information on this page is guidance only. Please refer to the [Code of Practice for Agricultural Environmental Management](#) for specific regulatory requirements.