



Reporting incidents of exposure to pesticides and veterinary medicines

What to do if you think people, animals or the environment have been harmed by exposure to pesticides or veterinary medicines

If you think you have been harmed by exposure to pesticides or veterinary medicines you ought to report it. Also, if you know of a case in which other people, animals or the environment have been harmed you ought to report it, unless someone else has already done so. It is important to report the incident as quickly as possible.

This leaflet tells you what to do and what happens after you have made a report. A form at the back of the leaflet sets out the key information you are asked to give. Pages 10-13 at the end of the leaflet give you more details about the relevant authorities, schemes and committees which deal with reports. But you don't need to read those pages to find out how to report an incident. Don't be put off reporting an incident if you don't understand some of the terms used in this leaflet - the relevant authority will know what to do.





What should I report?

Cases which you ought to report can happen in different ways; either from:

a one-off exposure to a large amount of a pesticide or veterinary medicine. This usually has an immediate effect on the health of people or animals or on the environment, although the effects might also be delayed; or

from longer-term exposure to low levels of such chemicals. This is more likely to cause delayed and less clear-cut symptoms of ill health.

It is important to report both types of cases. Here are some examples of how they might arise:

Pesticides

(eg weedkillers, mould killers, fly sprays or other insecticides, products for protecting wood from insect or fungal attack, gases used to fumigate food storage areas, some special paints used to prevent fouling of boat hulls, etc.)

Exposure can occur during the treatment of:

- crops or plants;
- wood (but excluding damp

proofing materials, which are not pesticides);

- pests such as rats, mice, cockroaches or ants;
- grain stores; and
- boat hulls.

Veterinary medicines

Exposure can occur during the treatment of animals (including fish on fish farms) with veterinary medicines such as:

- vaccines;
- antibiotics;
- tick or flea control products; and
- sheep dips.

Exposure to pesticides and veterinary medicines may also arise as a result of:

- pesticide spray drifting beyond a field boundary;
- deliberate or accidental poisoning of wild animals, birds of prey or pets;
- emptying (or improper disposal of) residues of used sheep dip from dip-baths;
- returning to treated premises before the end of a suitable exclusion period;
- spillage or leakage;
- contamination of waterways

which are also used for recreation; and

- dumped containers.

If you are an employer, self-employed or someone in control of premises you are required by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) to report certain work-related incidents to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or local authority (LA). These include fatal injury, acute illness or loss of consciousness resulting from absorption of a substance, and cases of phosphorus (including organo-phosphorus) poisonings diagnosed by a doctor. Further advice is available from your LA or HSE regional office, and in HSE's guidance booklet L73 *A guide to The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995*.

If you are reporting a pesticide or veterinary medicine incident which should also be reported under RIDDOR, you may wish to check with the relevant person that they have done so.

Why should I make a report?

Reporting cases of ill health will help the relevant authorities to be aware of any unforeseen harmful effects, take enforcement action where appropriate and prevent further incidents. Such information may also lead to the conditions of approval for a product being amended, or the product being withdrawn from the market. Before pesticides and veterinary medicines can be placed on the market they must be approved by ministers. In order to be approved, they must satisfy strict conditions. This aims to ensure that, if used according to the manufacturers' instructions and for their intended purpose, they should not harm people, animals or the environment. You can find more details on pages 10-13.



So what should I do?

First, see a doctor

If you think your health has been affected, seek medical advice immediately. Go to your doctor or, in more serious cases, go to hospital. Tell them that you may have been exposed to pesticides or veterinary medicines.

If your animal has been harmed you should seek veterinary advice immediately.

If possible, take the product label or data sheet when you go to your doctor, the hospital or the vet.

...then make a report

Make a note as soon as possible of the incident details:

- When, where and how did the exposure happen?
- What were you exposed to?
- How long did the exposure last?
- Were there any extreme weather conditions at the time (for example high winds, or a very hot or cold day).

The quickest way of first reporting the incident is by telephone.

Remember - the sooner you report an incident:

- the more likely it is that something can be done about it; and
- the more likely that it can be prevented from happening again.

You may report an incident on behalf of someone else if ill health prevents them from making the report. As there are several different authorities it can be difficult to know who to report to. The table 'Who should I report to?' (see pages 8 and 9) should help you decide. If you want to follow the progress of your report, you may wish to make a note of the date, time and office at which you made your report. **If you are in doubt about which authority you should make a report to, contact your local HSE office. You will find the address and telephone number in the phone book, or you can call the HSE InfoLine on 0541 545 500, from where your call can be put through to the appropriate HSE office.**

If the incident involves **human exposure to pesticides** you may wish to photocopy and complete the reporting form on pages 14-15. Although it is not essential to do so, using the reporting form will



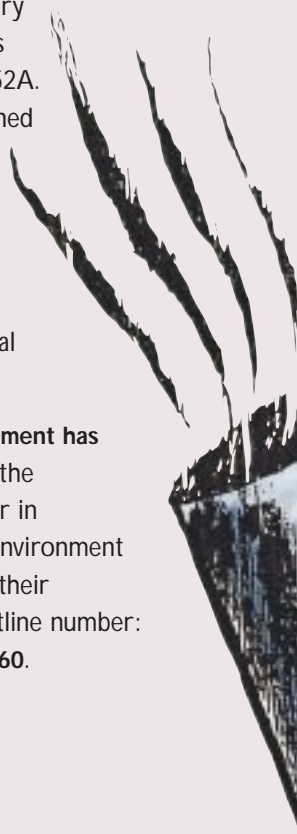
help you to give the information needed by the relevant authority. You should then pass on the information by telephone to either your local HSE office or the LA (addresses and phone numbers are in your local telephone directory). You may then wish to send in the form to the address shown to confirm your telephone call. You can also send in a form if you are unable to or prefer not to use the telephone.

If you suspect that **wildlife or pets have been poisoned by pesticides**

you can report cases via the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (**Freephone 0800 321 600**). The Scottish Agricultural Science Agency handles calls made in Scotland to the Freephone number. Alternatively, you can report direct to the local office of the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (in England and Wales only).

If you think that **people or animals have suffered an adverse reaction following exposure to veterinary medicines** you can report it by completing the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's reporting form MLA 252A. This form can be obtained from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, Veterinary Practices, Veterinary Investigation Centres, Animal Health Offices and HSE regional offices.

If you think the **environment has been polluted** contact the Environment Agency (or in Scotland, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency) on their 24-hour emergency hotline number: **Freephone 0800 80 70 60**.



What information do I need to give?

Information in three main areas will help the relevant authority. This information is listed on the reporting form in this leaflet. If you make your report by telephone, it will help if you have to hand a copy of the reporting form when you phone. You will need the following details:

Product details

Get all the information you can about the product involved from the product label, the person using the product or the manufacturer. **It is especially important to get the name of the manufacturer, the product name and active ingredients, and the registration number (if the product has one) - which will appear on the label with the prefix 'HSE' or 'MAFF' for pesticides and 'VM' or 'PL' for veterinary medicines.** If possible, have the actual product label or safety data sheet available.

Circumstances of exposure

It is also important to give details of where, when and how the exposure happened and who was exposed. Make a note of any extreme weather conditions that you noticed at the time of the exposure. Some examples of how exposure can happen are in the section 'What should I report?' at the front of this leaflet.

Effects of exposure

You should list all those people involved and give details of how their health has suffered as a result of exposure. If you telephone, you will only need to give a broad indication of the health effects.

Don't worry if you do not have all this information to hand - you should still report the incident. It may be useful for any subsequent investigation if you can provide photographs of the incident site and the names and addresses of any witnesses to the incident.

Who should I report to?

If the incident is at...	and it involves...	it should be reported to...
Factories Farms Forestry sites Horticulture sites Building sites Railways Domestic dwellings ¹ (except for amateur use) Public amenities (such as pavements and paths)	People _____ Environment _____ Wildlife, livestock or pets ²	HSE _____ Environment Agency ³ (EA) and HSE _____ Agriculture Department ⁴
Examples include: Offices Animal Care premises Golf Courses Garden Centres Sport and Games Stadia Leisure Centres Parks and Gardens Zoos and Safari Parks Domestic dwellings (amateur use only)	People _____ Environment _____ Wildlife, livestock or pets	Local Authority ⁵ (LA) _____ EA ³ _____ Agriculture Department ³
All locations	People _____ Treated animals _____ Environment _____ Wildlife	Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), and HSE or LA _____ VMD _____ EA ³ and VMD _____ Agriculture Department ⁴ and VMD

who can be contacted at...

HSE Regional offices listed in your local phonebook, or via the HSE InfoLine on 0541 545 500

The EA³ 24-hour hotline number on Freephone 0800 80 70 60

Agriculture Department addresses and telephone numbers are in your local phone book. Incidents involving poisoning by pesticides of wildlife or pets can be reported to the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme on Freephone 0800 321 600

Local Authority addresses and telephone numbers are in your local phone book under 'Environmental Health'

The EA³ 24-hour hotline number on Freephone 0800 80 70 60

Agriculture Department addresses and telephone numbers are in your local phone book. Incidents involving poisoning by pesticides of wildlife or pets can be reported to the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme on Freephone 0800 321 600

Veterinary Medicines Directorate, FREEPOST KT4503, Woodham Lane, New Haw, Addlestone, SURREY KT15 3BR
Tel: 01932 338427

EA³ - 24-hour hotline on Freephone 0800 80 70 60

Agriculture Department addresses and phone numbers are in your local phone book



Pesticide incidents



Veterinary Medicine incidents

- 1 Only when people are employed to carry out the work; other incidents involving pesticides for amateur use in domestic premises should be reported to the Environmental Health Department of the Local Authority.
- 2 Any incident involving animals may become a matter for HSE, although this is less likely for wild animals.
- 3 In England and Wales, the Environment Agency. In Scotland, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).
- 4 The Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) in England and Wales, or the Scottish Office Agriculture Environment and Fisheries Department as appropriate.
- 5 Except where the work has been carried out by the Local Authority, in which case incidents should be reported to HSE.

You don't need to read this section to know how to make a report of an incident.

This information is included for anyone wanting to know more about the processes involved after a report is received by the relevant authority.



What happens now?

Incidents involving people's health

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors will normally investigate all pesticide and veterinary medicine complaints involving alleged ill health where these occur in places such as factories and farms (as listed in the table). Environmental complaints and those not involving ill health may also be investigated. Depending on the outcome of an investigation, an inspector may:

- give verbal or written advice;
- issue a notice; or,
- if appropriate, and enough evidence can be obtained, consider a prosecution.

Local Authority (LA) inspectors are responsible for investigating incidents at other places, (from offices to zoos and safari parks - see table) as well as those involving the domestic use of amateur pesticides. They have the same powers as HSE inspectors.



Exposure involving pesticides

Once an investigation is complete, HSE and LA inspectors send details of reported cases to the **Pesticide Incident Appraisal Panel (PIAP)**. This scheme, which covers adverse reactions to both agricultural and non-agricultural pesticides, is organised by HSE. The panel's role is to examine information compiled from investigations by HSE and LAs into cases of illness alleged to be related to pesticides. PIAP provides an overview of these cases in order to inform the pesticide approvals process described in the section 'Why should I make a report?'. It does not act as an arbiter in individual cases.

Exposure involving veterinary medicines

The **Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)**, an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), is responsible for surveillance of suspected adverse reactions to veterinary medicines. Its aim is to safeguard public health, animal health and the environment and promote animal welfare by ensuring the safety, quality and efficacy of all aspects of veterinary medicines in the UK. VMD operates the **Suspected Adverse Reactions Surveillance Scheme (SARSS)**, which includes the monitoring of **Suspected Adverse Reactions (SARs)** in humans. Reports on form MLA 252A of adverse reactions to veterinary medicines are submitted to the **Veterinary Products Committee (VPC)**. Its independent subcommittee, the **Appraisal Panel**, evaluates all human SARs to identify any trends or signs of emerging problems.

Incidents involving treated animals, including livestock

Incidents involving veterinary medicinal treatments, reported on form MLA 252A to the VMD's SARSS (see previous paragraph), are submitted to the VPC. This

information is used in reviewing product approvals.



Incidents involving wildlife or pets

The **Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA)** operates the **Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS)** on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF). This scheme monitors the impact of agricultural pesticides on wildlife and pets. Once the FRCA has accepted a case for investigation, its inspectors may make a field visit. If necessary, animal carcasses are sent to a local Veterinary Investigation Centre for post-mortem examination. Samples are then analysed for pesticide residues. If enough evidence is obtained of an offence, then prosecution action can be taken.

In Scotland the **Scottish Agricultural Science Agency** carries out the laboratory investigations. Staff of the **Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department (SOAEFD)** conduct field investigations where poisoning has been confirmed. They also liaise with the police and animal welfare organisations.

Details of incidents reported to the VMD on form MLA 252A will be passed to the VPC for use when reviewing product approvals.

Incidents involving the environment

In England and Wales, the **Environment Agency (EA)** is responsible for preventing the pollution of watercourses. EA inspectors will investigate reported cases of water pollution caused by either pesticides or veterinary medicines and will take the necessary enforcement action. This may result in the prosecution of anyone deliberately or negligently causing water pollution. The EA is also responsible for preventing the contamination of land, and has powers to prosecute anyone deliberately or negligently contaminating land. All those who want to dispose of waste pesticides or sheep dips into or onto land will need to apply to the EA for authorisation to do this. The regulations also give EA the power to control activities, such as sheep dipping, which may pose a threat to groundwater.

In Scotland, the **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)** has a similar role.

Details of incidents reported to the VMD will be referred to the VPC for consideration when product approvals are reviewed.

Committees

Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP)

This independent committee was set up to give ministers advice on any matters relating to the control of pests. Ministers are required to consult the ACP as to approvals of pesticides which they are considering giving, revoking or suspending; and on the conditions attached to those approvals. In giving its advice, the ACP takes into account reported incidents of ill health and environmental damage. HSE gives the ACP information on reported ill health in its Pesticides Annual Report which also has details of other reported incidents that do not involve ill health.

Veterinary Products Committee (VPC)

The independent VPC gives advice to ministers about the safety, quality and efficacy of veterinary medicines. To enable it to do this, it receives information from the SARSS and promotes the collection of other information relating to suspected adverse reactions.



Notification to HSE or Local Authority (LA) of pesticide incidents

- It is important that incidents are reported as soon as possible. Please telephone the relevant enforcement authority using this form as a guide to the information you will be asked to give. Reporting by telephone will ensure that any investigation will not be delayed, although not all incidents will be successfully investigated.
- You should use this form to tell HSE or the LA about a pesticide incident for which they are the relevant authority as described in the table in this leaflet. You can also use it to report an incident on behalf of someone else. Do not use it to tell any other relevant authority about an incident - they will have their own reporting systems.

Have you (or has anyone else) already reported this incident? Yes No

If Yes, on what date and to whom did you report it?

Details of people involved

Name

Address

Age Telephone number

If this incident involved anyone else, please list below (where known) their names, addresses, ages and telephone numbers:

Confidentiality

Does anyone involved wish to have their name withheld in any subsequent investigation?

Yes No

If Yes, please list name(s)

(NB - it may not be possible to investigate the incident fully, or at all, if the relevant authority does not have permission to disclose this information. You should also be aware that, with some incidents, the pesticide user may be able to identify who has made the complaint from the description of the circumstances. If this concerns you, please ask to speak to an inspector.)

Details of the incident

1 Product details - write down here the **manufacturer's name, the product name and number** (you can get these from the container label, the person using the product or the manufacturer)

2 Circumstances of exposure - who was using the product (if known), when and where was it being used (be as precise as possible about the date/time/location) and how did the exposure happen? (see leaflet under 'What should I report?' for some examples of how exposure can happen). **Were there any extreme weather conditions that you noticed at the time of the exposure?**

3 Effects of exposure - describe any ill-health effects which you believe you or others involved have had as a result of being exposed

Have you or others involved been to a doctor or a hospital for treatment for these ill-health effects?

Yes

No

If **No**, you are advised to see a doctor as soon as possible.

Has a doctor confirmed that the ill-health is associated with exposure to a pesticide?

Yes

No

Possible

Now send this form to your nearest office of HSE or, if appropriate to the relevant LA Environmental Health Department - addresses and telephone numbers are in the local telephone directory.

Further information

This leaflet is produced by HSE.
HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from:

HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury,
Suffolk CO10 6FS
Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995

HSE priced publications are also available from good booksellers.

For other enquiries ring HSE's InfoLine
Tel: 0541 545500, or write to HSE's
Information Centre, Broad Lane, Sheffield
S3 7HQ.

HSE home page on the World Wide Web:
<http://www.open.gov.uk/hse/hsehome.htm>

This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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