

## Pesticide Storage Facilities

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Pesticide storage facilities should be constructed and maintained keeping safety and environmental protection in mind. The following suggestions and guidelines will be of benefit to pesticide users who store pesticides in New Jersey. Of course, ideally you should purchase only the quantity of pesticide that you require so there is no leftover materials to store, but this is not always possible.

### Building Site

New Jersey regulations state that the site of the storage area should be one that is not subject to flooding. It also should be downwind and downhill from “sensitive” areas such as houses, ponds, play areas, etc., and should be situated where windblown pesticide dusts and particles will not cause harm.

### Proper Storage Area

Properly designed pesticide storage facilities keep pesticides in good condition, are environmentally safe, fire-proof, theft-proof and child-proof. Ideally, the storage area should be a separate room, building, shed or truck body devoted exclusively to pesticide storage. In New Jersey, it is mandated that the actual storage area be kept separate from a living area and/or work area and that restricted-use pesticides be kept in structurally separate rooms. Most specialists agree that the safest storage facility would be constructed of metal with concrete floors for easy clean-up in case of leaks or spills. Some concrete floors may soak up liquid pesticides when spilled, and treating with a concrete sealer or other impenetrable material will prevent this type of contamination.

This facility or storage area should be well-marked and have warning signs identifying the area. The

signs must be in English and possibly other languages depending on the ethnic majority of the local geographical area in which the storage area is located, and must be “prominently” displayed. Weatherproof, bright warning signs that say “**DANGER - PESTICIDES. KEEP OUT**” or something similar should be posted over every door and window (written in at least English and Spanish).

### Drainage

A drainage system should be built to collect any runoff water. Pesticides which may be in rinsing tanks, spills, storage tank seepage and heavy runoff from fire fighting or floods must be controlled to prevent damage to groundwater or surface water. Dikes, collecting pools and washing slabs with sumps are effective drainage systems. All collected water from runoff should be treated as a surplus pesticide and disposed of as such.

### Heat

The storage area should be heated, dry, well-ventilated, and the pesticides should be kept out of direct sunlight and away from steam pipes. Cold temperatures may crystallize liquid pesticides, and hot temperatures may cause pesticides to separate or deteriorate. As a general guideline, keep the storage area above 40 degrees F and below 95 degrees F. Many growers have found that a light bulb left on will adequately heat small spaces. Damp areas cause metal or paper containers to deteriorate. If the humidity is high, wettable powders and granular formulations of pesticides can cake or lump into useless blocks. If dampness is a problem, a dehumidifier may be a reasonable solution. Further, in New Jersey all containers must have a legible and visible EPA registered label attached. These labels are often susceptible to dampness, and either deteriorate or loosen and drop off the container when stored in damp areas. It is often



helpful to protect the original labels by covering them with transparent wrapping tape.

## Ventilation

Ventilation fans should be installed if there are none, and fire extinguishers, smoke detectors/alarms and clean-up equipment should be kept handy. In New Jersey, ventilation must be sufficient to keep fumes from intruding into a living area.

It is to the farmers benefit to make sure that all containers (metal, plastic and paper) are protected from punctures, leaks or deterioration to prevent leaks or spills. Some states require this, and New Jersey strongly recommends that the entire facility be located where chemicals cannot contaminate wells or surface water if there is a leak.

## Labels

Pesticides in large containers, or those which are very heavy, should be stored on the floor to prevent their falling. Pallets will help keep the container or package off the cold or damp floor, but do not use these pallets for other pesticides or other purposes. Do not let shelved containers extend beyond the shelf edge or cabinet edge where they can be easily spilled or knocked off. Mark each container with the purchase date and keep a complete inventory of all products. New Jersey DEPE mandates that a listing of all stored pesticides must be kept in a separate location from the storage area. Further, this list must be updated annually and sent to the local fire company with the actual location of the storage area. It is also suggested that you include with your inventory list the name and phone numbers of your physician, hospital, Poison Control Centers and Emergency Poison Centers for immediate access if needed.

## Contamination

Pesticides must frequently be protected from one another to avoid cross-contamination. Do NOT store herbicides with other pesticides (especially wettable powders) since some herbicides are volatile and readily contaminate other chemicals, often going undetected until crop damage is observed. Baits (such as rodenticides, insecticides, and avicides) should also be stored separately since any odors they absorb may give them an offensive odor, rendering them useless. Also, never store respirators, gloves and other safety equipment in the same area as pesticides because of possible contamination. Similarly, do not keep food, feed, seed, fertilizer, veterinary supplies, plant materials or cigarettes in the same area.

If possible, keep a section in the storage building reserved for surplus or banned pesticides awaiting disposal, grouping them by method of disposal. This may help prevent mix-ups resulting in improper disposal for such materials.

Lastly, New Jersey DEPE mandates that the storage enclosure be locked. It is advisable that the entire storage area be secured at all times when not in use. Be sure to keep the gates or doors locked each and every time you leave the area, even if for only a short period of time.

For more information, obtain a copy of "Pesticide Regulation Guidelines for Farm Applicators and Other Private Applicators" and a copy of the Regulations Regarding the Storage of Pesticides and Containers found in NJAC 7:30 - 9.4 to 9.5 from the Pesticide Control Program, Division of Environmental Quality, Department of Environmental Protection and Energy, CN 411, 380 Scotch Road, Trenton, NJ 08625-0411.

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