

# UF/IFAS Extension Hendry County

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## Pesticide Spill Management Bullet Points

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A pesticide spill refers to unplanned spill or leakage of a pesticide into the environment that occurs during storage, use, transport, or disposal of a pesticide.

A spill may be caused by a single container falling off a truck, or a 55-gallon barrel punctured by a forklift. A serious spill could even involve fire and the explosion of leaking containers. The spill risk increases with the size of the operation and the number of persons involved in pesticide handling. The most hazardous activities involving pesticides are mixing and loading of concentrates.

The environment can be easily harmed by careless mixing and filling procedures leading to spills. Areas where pesticides are mixed and equipment is filled have significant potential to contaminate groundwater and surface water if proper precautions are not taken. Carefully choose the pesticide mixing and loading area. It should be outside, away from other people, livestock, and pets. Pesticides should not be mixed in areas where a spill or overflow could get into a water supply. If possible, mix and load pesticides on a concrete pad so that spilled pesticides can be removed without entering the soil. Handling areas frequently must be near a pond or stream bank, as water is needed to fill the sprayer. If this is the case, the area should be graded to slope away from the water. If you must work indoors, or at night, be sure there is adequate ventilation and light to minimize the chance of an accident. Have a supply of clean water and soap available and, if possible, do not work alone.

If you are transporting pesticides, have an emergency plan in place for accidents. Since accidents are often caused by others, you must be ready with a spill action plan.

After reading this module you will:

1. Have a better understanding of spill management including first aid to injured people, keeping others from exposure and using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) before responding to a spill.
2. Spill prevention, control and clean up procedures
3. Know the three “C’s” of spill management
  - a. Control the spill (minimize the quantity released)
  - b. Contain the spill (into as small an area as possible)
  - c. Clean up the spill right away
4. Practice good spill prevention habits including
  - a. Methods of handling and storing pesticides
  - b. Shop safety and fire procedures
  - c. Properly securing pesticides in vehicles and storage areas
  - d. Inspection procedures for storage areas

Spill response requires regular education and training of personnel in prevention, control, and cleanup procedures. Education can effectively reduce the risk of a pesticide spill and the harm it may cause.