

## During Spraying

# Container Cleaning



Cleaning pesticide containers correctly at the time of use ensures that a potential source of pesticide exposure to people, animals and the environment is kept to an absolute minimum. It is also economical and efficient to add the washings to the spray tank as this ensures that all the chemical is used up and minimises waste disposal costs.

Take the time to clean containers properly. It is easier and quicker to clean the containers “on the job” rather than leaving material to dry which then needs to be cleaned later. Consider larger pack sizes and choose products that minimise or make cleaning easier. Optimum spraying time in the field is limited, so it is important you do not waste time cleaning containers, choosing alternative packs and products can speed up the cleaning process.

**Visibly clean containers are non-hazardous waste.**

**Dirty pesticide containers are hazardous waste.**

**Disposal charges for hazardous waste can be 5 times more expensive.**

**Clean pesticide containers thoroughly to keep disposal costs down.**

### During Mixing

- Ensure mixing and filling is taking place at an appropriately designed site. See the Guide on Pesticide Filling and Handling Areas;
- Read and follow all label instructions;
- Wear appropriate protective clothing;
- Avoid spillages. If a spill occurs clean it up immediately using absorbent material such as sand or cat litter; dispose of waste through a registered waste disposal contractor
- “Manage” container seals, ensure they are cleaned and are not dropped on the ground
- Take care to ensure the outside of the container and any cardboard outers do not become contaminated otherwise these will need cleaning too.
- Ensure all containers are emptied as far as practical –
  - **For liquids** – drain thoroughly. Make sure that the opening is at the lowest point to allow for the fullest drainage.
  - **For solids** – empty packs should be shaken and folds pulled out ensuring that no product is trapped. Take care to avoid operator contamination. Depending on the material and the design it may be possible to “rinse” some packs
- Always clean containers immediately after emptying as if residues dry they are harder to remove..
- Never re-use a pesticide container unless it is a dedicated re-usable container or if you need it to hold the same pesticide from a damaged container.

### How to Clean

- Good cleaning with water will reduce pesticide residues in the container down to the tiniest amounts. The containers then have the least possible hazard and the widest range of recycling or disposal options. Visibly cleaned containers are accepted as non-hazardous waste by the Environment Agency.
- Check the product label for any specific instructions.
- Use water to rinse and add the washings immediately to the spray tank.
- Do not wash containers which have gassing powders such as aluminium, magnesium or zinc phosphides. Instead, fill them with dry earth or sand before disposing of through licensed waste disposal contractor.



#### Container Draining

Either invert containers on a draining rack or let containers stand upright after the main rinse. At the end of the filling operation, and then drain the last dregs into the induction bowl.

#### Visibly Clean Containers

Ensure containers are visibly clean. Typically this can be achieved by pressure rinsing for 10-30 seconds **or** triple rinsing/ If in doubt keep cleaning until they **are visibly clean**

#### Container Seals

Manage and clean container seals; check with your recycling contractor if they need to be removed. If not leave them partially attached to the empty container or put them back in the container. If they need to be removed place them in a separate container. Ensure container seals are visibly clean,

## Pressure Cleaning

- Most new sprayers are supplied with pressure (or continuous) rinsing devices. These should always be used when available as they provide a quick, efficient and consistent method of rinsing containers.
- Check equipment manufacturers instructions on how best to get results from rinsing device
- Ensure clean water is used especially for any final rinse, check sprayer manufacturer's instructions for more advice on using the pressure rinsing device. Typically containers should be rinsed for 10-30 seconds and gently moved around the rinsing nozzle to ensure even coverage
- It takes longer to rinse some packs and formulations than others. Keep rinsing until the container is visibly clean
- Ensure that containers have sufficient time to drain after rinsing.



### Rinsing Nozzles

Fit specialist container rinsing nozzles to the pressure rinsing device. This improves cleaning speed and performance

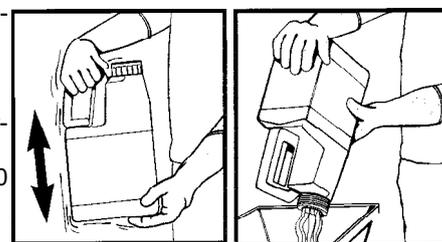
### Sticky Formulations

Dilute spray solution which usually contains some adjuvants can be a better at cleaning sticky formulations than water. But remember to use clean water for the final rinse through.

## Triple Rinsing

Means just that; rinsing the container three times. You can triple rinse most rigid containers in the following way:

1. Fill the emptied container 10 – 20% full of water
2. Replace the cap securely
3. Depending on container size shake, rotate or roll it vigorously to rinse all inside surfaces
4. Remove the cap, add the washings to the spray tank and let the container drain for 30 seconds or more
5. Repeat steps 1 to 4 twice more
6. Put the cap back on the container and dispose of according to the section on disposal.



Correctly cleaned containers are now ready for recycling or disposal.

## Disposal of Cleaned Containers

- Follow the guidance given in the statutory Code of Practice for Using Plant Protection Products
- **Farm waste regulations mean that burial and burning of waste such as pesticide containers on farm and use of farm tips is illegal in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.** Similar but different arrangements apply in Scotland check with SEPA. These arrangements are summarised in this guide but more details can be found in Pesticide Container Disposal;
- Unless advised otherwise by your waste disposal/recycling contractor, store dry containers awaiting disposal, upright with caps off, under cover in a dedicated secure area;
- Recycling contractors may accept properly cleaned containers visit [www.wastedirectory.org.uk](http://www.wastedirectory.org.uk);
- Cleaned containers may be accepted at licensed disposal sites, subject to conditions allowing acceptance of such waste. Correctly cleaned containers need not be treated as hazardous waste;
- Alternatively use a licensed Waste Disposal Contractor;
- For more advice see the CPA Guide on Pesticide Container Disposal.



This Guide was produced by the Crop Protection Association (CPA) with help from the Environment Agency and the Pesticides Forum and is part of the CPA's ongoing support of The Voluntary Initiative.

The Voluntary Initiative promotes responsible pesticide use.

[www.cropprotection.org.uk](http://www.cropprotection.org.uk)

[www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk](http://www.voluntaryinitiative.org.uk)

