

November 2018



Hazardous Waste in the County of Santa Clara



Does your business have unwanted / unused pesticides and want to know where you can dispose of them properly?

Businesses that generate small quantities of hazardous waste may qualify to use the County's Conditionally Exempt Small Quantity Generator (CESQG) program. For more information click on this link:

www.sccgov.org/sites/rwr/hhw/Pages/hhw.aspx

To schedule an appointment for hazardous waste drop off please call: **(800) 207-8222**.

If you are a resident of Santa Clara County and have household hazardous waste you can call to make an appointment to drop it off at one of the collection facilities. To participate, call: **(408) 299-7300**

Cupertino and Palo Alto residents must contact their respective cities for their household hazardous waste programs.

Cupertino (800) 449-7587

Palo Alto (650) 496-5910

Santa Clara County Dog Team

*Hendrix and the Biologist team
helping to stop invasives at
parcel facilities*



California is the fifth largest supplier of food to the world! We grow over 400 different commodities in this State and in 2017, California's farms and ranches were a \$50 billion-dollar industry.

As you know, California growers battle many factors to bring their crops from seed to harvest, including weather, increasing water costs, labor, trade issues, and pest pressure. Many agricultural pests are nonnative invasive species that were introduced to the State accidentally. They may have arrived by hitchhiking in shipments from out of the state or the country, through the mail in uncertified agricultural products, in the luggage of travelers, or hidden in vehicles, ships, airplanes, etc. When those nonnative pests make it to our temperate environment, they can reproduce rapidly because they don't have the natural enemies found in their place of origin. The control or eradication of these invasive pests can cost tens of thousands to millions of dollars. Sometimes the cost of eradication is too much and the State can't justify the costs to eradicate it, such as the olive fruit fly, *Drosophila suzukii*, etc.

In its efforts to stop the introduction of those unwanted pests, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) developed the California Agriculture Detector Dog Team Program. Each team (a dog and handler), visit parcel facilities looking for uncertified packages containing agricultural products. The dog sniffs and alerts (scratches) on the packages and then the contents are carefully inspected by a Biologist to verify that the shipment complies with all quarantine regulations and are free of pests. Today, there are thirteen dog teams employed by different counties.

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During fiscal year 2018, a total of 659 significant pests were intercepted by the Dog Teams and 2,588 packages were rejected for violating state and federal plant quarantine laws and regulations.

Santa Clara County's team consists of our dog handler Marithza, and a black lab named Hendrix. The team is supported by different quarantine biologists that inspect packages Hendrix alerts on.

Our dog team can't do all the work alone. You too can be part of the team and help us with our mission to protect California's environment and our local agriculture. Keep your eyes open and report unusual pests and diseases to our office. Do not bring fruits, vegetables, or agriculture items from your trips out of the country, other states, or quarantined areas within California.

If you have any questions regarding domestic incoming shipments, contact your local ag commissioner's office.

If you would like to ship something to another state, you can visit that state's agriculture website or you can look up their entry requirements at the National Plant Board's website:

www.nationalplantboard.org/laws-and-regulations

Package Markings: Any shipment of agricultural products that enters or passes through California must be conspicuously labeled with the name and address of the shipper and receiver, the name of the country, state, or territory where the agricultural item was grown, and a statement of its contents.

For more information, feel free to visit our website and check out Hendrix's webpage: sccagriculture.org



The pictures up above are showing Hendrix sniffing out "target" boxes. The picture to the left is showing an example of a parcel with oranges that Hendrix intercepted in the mail

2018 Documented Secondary Poisonings

Great Horned Owl, Barn Owl & several eastern tree squirrels



This picture of this Great Horned Owl was snapped by the homeowner that found the dying owl on her doorstep in Morgan Hill. The owl died shortly after being found and was turned over to the Dept of Fish and Wildlife. In this case, our office saw the posting about this owl on social media before we received the morbidity report from Fish and Wildlife. We were able to confirm that the owl had 0.550 ppm brodifacoum and traces of bromadiolone, difethialone, and diphacinone in his system. The owl consequently bled to death.

Earlier this year we received a report from Fish and Wildlife about a barn owl that was found on the ground in Stanford. The owl was treated at a wildlife treatment center and was given Vitamin K, antibiotics, and anti-inflammatories. It appeared to be improving for several days but then suddenly she began declining rapidly and had to be euthanized. Upon her necropsy, they found 0.11ppm brodifacoum and a trace amount of bromadiolone.

Please be sure to continue using these baits according to their label instructions, monitor your bait stations, and pick up dead rodents to prevent these unnecessary deaths. Growers and pest control operators aren't the only ones applying these materials as our last example demonstrates:

A few months ago, a homeowner called our office out of concern of 8 tree squirrels that had died in her backyard. She found some green bait blocks near the bodies which lead her to believe they were poisoned. This homeowner put on her detective hat and combed her neighborhood looking for the origin of the bait blocks. When we spoke to the neighbor who had purchased "Tomcat Bait Chunx" for rats in his yard we discovered that the bait was so attractive, animals chewed through the plastic bucket to get to it. We found evidence of chewed plastic where the container once sat in the gated garden in the homeowner's backyard. Once this homeowner realized the squirrels had gotten into the bait, they properly disposed of the material through Hazardous Waste. In this case, we had a homeowner who didn't follow label directions, specifically, they didn't store the material in an area inaccessible to wildlife. Because the unintentional deaths involved invasive eastern tree squirrels, we educated the homeowner about pesticide label requirements and we did not forward the case to Fish and Wildlife.

2018 Pesticide Horror Stories

DPR compiled pesticide illnesses

DPR all too regularly receives reports of illnesses or even deaths.

These reports are compiled by county agricultural commissioners (CACs) who work with the department on pesticide enforcement.

In California, most pesticide related illnesses and injuries occur in homes or at non-farm workplaces, like restaurants. The main reasons: Storing pesticides in food or beverage containers, and failure to read the instructions on the products.

Below is a sample of some incidents from DPR's Pesticide Episode Investigation Reports.



Dangerous Drink

Storing pesticides near or in food containers is always a bad idea. This was a bitter lesson learned by a woman in Southern California this year who reached for a glass of lemonade in the morning and got something else instead.

The woman told an investigator that while staying at a friend's house, she pulled a one-gallon jug of what she believed to be lemonade from the refrigerator that actually contained pool chlorine! The container, she explained, was mistakenly placed in the fridge by her friend's husband, who apparently also believed it to be lemonade. After taking a swig, she spit the chlorine out, but it was too late. Her tongue began to burn, and her throat and mouth were irritated. Taken to a regional medical center, a doctor determined she suffered burns to her throat. She was hospitalized for three days. The victim declined to provide the investigator with the name, contact information or address of the friend she stayed with. "She stated that it would never happen again and would advise her friends against placing chemicals in proximity to food or beverage items."

A lousy situation

The most chilling stories DPR sees are those involving children. Like this one. Early this year, a toddler was admitted to the hospital after ingesting a chemical described as "lice powder." The victim's mother told the local county agricultural commissioner's staff that she found her son leaving her roommate's bedroom,

covered in a white powder. The victim's family rented a room in the friend's house. "The friend told the victim's mother that she had a Ziploc bag containing lice powder, on top of her medicine cabinet, but out of reach of children," the report says. It notes that the unlabeled product was purchased in Guatemala so is illegal to use in California. The toddler was washed and changed into new clothes. However, shortly after eating, he laid down and began to exhibit symptoms of illness. As his parents drove him to the hospital, he was shuddering, vomiting, and having difficulty breathing.

Luckily, the boy recovered and was released the next day.

Bleach and ammonia: A dangerous cocktail

One afternoon, a teen mopping floors in the bar area of a restaurant was sickened by toxic fumes after mixing bleach with ammonia. According to an investigation, the youth, 17, suffered a reaction to the resulting noxious gas (called chloramine). Symptoms included shortness of breath and chest pain. He told the investigator he was instructed to use the bleach-ammonia mixture to clean the bar area. He notified his manager after he became ill and was picked up by his father. His dad took him to the emergency room, where he remained for 24 hours. An inspector later spoke to the manager and explained that the product label clearly states that bleach and ammonia products should not be mixed, and that mixing these products had caused an employee to become ill. The bleach product label also requires users to wear rubber gloves and eyewear, which were not provided by the employer for employees to use. The incident was referred to Cal/OSHA, at the state Department of Industrial Relations

Rats!

Here's a freaky story about a rat – but the rodent wasn't the scariest part. It was about 9 p.m. – just before Halloween last year -- when a 59-year-old woman spotted a rat in her home. She grabbed a can of flea-and-bed bug fogger with the intention of killing the rodent. However, as she pulled her arm back, she accidentally triggered some spray from the can, which she accidentally inhaled. She went to a local medical center, where staff noted she experienced coughing, vomiting and dry heaving. The woman told the local county agricultural commissioner's office investigator, during a subsequent interview, that her embarrassment exceeded her health concerns.

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Pesticides Blast Injures Neighbor!

One February morning, a man was injured when a spray bottle being used by his neighbor's gardener suddenly exploded – sending plastic fragments flying into his hand. The gardener, it turned out, was instructed by his customer to use pool chlorine to kill weeds in her yard. He mixed the powder with water in a 5-gallon pump sprayer....and then added a spoonful of herbicide.

The chlorine label noted it should not be mixed with acidic products, such as the herbicide he'd mixed in. An investigator surmised gas had built up in the plastic bottle, causing it to explode.

The neighbor was hit by plastic debris and suffered a broken finger. He was also splashed with the chemical concoction. The man was driven to an urgent care facility for examination and treatment.

In a later interview, the homeowner admitted she'd bought the chlorine for use on her weeds. The investigator determined there had been a violation of the Food and Agricultural Code. Moral of this story... love thy neighbor! Pool chlorine is for pools. Use pesticides consistent with the label: the way they are intended. Do not make your own home brew.

These pesticide horror stories may be shocking...but the main takeaway is always follow product labels, including warnings about mixing, storing and use.

Pesticide Use Reporting On-Line

By Biologist Kristian Barbeau

We've increased our percentage of on-line pesticide reporting on the Cal-Ag Permits website which has significantly reduced the number of paper reports the County receives. However, we are still woefully under the State average...

If you are one of our holdouts or are unsure about signing up for this service; I am available to help anyone who needs a little guidance on the use of the system! My phone number is: (408) 201-0650 and my email is: Kristian.Barbeau@cep.sccgov.org Give me a call so I can set you up!

From the Question File:

Questions from Growers

Question: What kind of storage sign does my storage area need? Where do I have to post them?

Answer: Pesticide storage areas that store danger or warning pesticides must be posted. 3CCR Section 6674 requires specific information on the sign:

DANGER

POISON STORAGE AREA

**ALL UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS KEEP OUT
KEEP DOOR LOCKED WHEN NOT IN USE**

These storage signs must be posted from any direction of probable approach and be readable at 25 feet. The signs must also be repeated in a language other than English when it may reasonably be anticipated that persons who do not understand the English language will come to the enclosure.

Question: How long can you use a pesticide after purchase?

Answer: That's a good question! Each pesticide has a different shelf life and it's tough to say how long the pesticide stays stable. If you have questions about stability, call the manufacturer or your pesticide dealer.

Another important thing to keep in mind is food tolerances. The EPA will change a food tolerance when new information has become available and will lower or remove a tolerance of a pesticide on a crop. (Usually, they will have a few years of phase out before the tolerance has been made final.) We had a grower that purchased a pesticide 18 years ago and he used it recently on his crop. The pesticide was labeled for the crop but the problem was the EPA changed the food tolerance to zero 15+ years ago. The way we found out is DPR performs random residue testing on produce and found the product with residue in the channels of trade. The grower was in violation of the EPA tolerance standards. So how is a grower to know if the tolerance has changed?? If it's been 3-5 years since you purchased a pesticide and you want to use it, you can check the Federal Code of Regulations by typing "40 CFR Food Tolerances" in your browser. Here is a direct link to the law:

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/40/part-180/subpart-C>

If you can't find your answer, give us a call! We will forward your question to DPR. They will look up your pesticide and crop and tell you if the residue tolerance has changed.