Why should I be careful when using pesticides?

Pesticides can be hazardous if not used safely. Pesticides can enter the body in three ways--by mouth, through the skin and eyes, and through inhalation (breathing into the lungs).

READ labels carefully--one section of the label will tell you about the toxicity of the product when it enters the body.

What are some key factors to remember when using pesticides?

- Be trained in the correct use and handling of pest control products - some products can be used by specially trained and certified personnel.
- Become familiar with regulations that apply to pesticide use and follow all regulatory requirements.
- Minimize use of pesticides where possible.
- Choose correct pesticide for the job.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing when handling and spraying pesticide products.
- Follow the precautions that appear on the label.
- Inspect pesticide containers for leaks before handling.
- Contact power utility to determine proper distances between spray nozzle and power lines.
- Learn to recognize the typical signs of poisoning and the correct first aid procedures.
- Stop work and seek medical attention immediately if you feel ill during pesticide use or you notice signs in a co-worker.
- Have washing facilities as close as possible to mixing and loading sites.
- Keep products in their original labelled packages.
- Mix pesticides using equipment reserved only for that purpose. Mixing and loading areas should be design to contain any spills and facilitate cleanup.
- Fill mixing tanks one third full with water before adding pesticide concentrate.
- Tap sides of containers to ensure that any remaining wettable powder falls into the spray tank.
- Keep containers below eye level to minimize splashes to the face.
- Use proper tools to open a container. Work in a well-ventilated area.
- Stand upwind of all opening, pouring and mixing operations, if working outdoors.
- Ensure that all spraying equipment is in good repair and properly calibrated.
- Use the proper nozzle for job. Control spray angle and droplet size. The wider the angle and the smaller the droplets, the greater the potential for drift.
- Stand and apply so that the wind blows the pesticide away from you.
- Dispose of empty containers according to directions on the label.
- Familiarize yourself with disposal arrangements.
- Ensure effective storage.
• Wash face and hands thoroughly after completing mixing operation.
• Wash hands before eating, drinking, smoking or using the toilet.
• Shower thoroughly, with special attention to hair and fingernails, after each pesticide application or at the end of the work shift.
• Change clothes daily and more often if any contamination occurs.
• Wash contaminated clothing separately from normal, family laundry.

What should I not do when working with pesticides?

• Do not work alone when handling pesticides.
• Do not handle containers roughly.
• Do not guess at the amount of pesticide to mix or apply.
• Do not stir pesticides with your hands.
• Do not keep food, beverages, tobacco, cigarettes, cups or cutlery near work areas or in work clothes.
• Do not rub eyes or touch your mouth with hands while working with pesticides.
• Do not use mouth to siphon liquid materials or to blow out a clogged spray nozzle.
• Do not spray near electrical power lines.
• Do not fill tanks completely when spraying hilly areas using spraying equipment pulled by a tractor.
• Do not make sharp turns.
• Do not spray if wind speed is more than 8 km/h (5 mph) or if air temperature is above 30°C (86°F). Consult regulations--ultra-low volume spraying may have different requirements.

What are some tips when using compressed air sprayers?

• Check hoses and connections for leaks.
• Ensure that the material the strap is made from does not absorb chemicals.
• Secure sprayer lid before lifting.
• Place the unit on a waist-high surface before slipping shoulder straps on or off.
• Walk upright to avoid any leakage through filling caps or air-bleed holes.
• Check clothing periodically, especially the back of pants, for pesticide deposit.
• Do not walk backwards while carrying compressed air sprayer.