

Understanding the Pesticide Label in Alachua County

When reading and following the pesticide label it is extremely important to always remember that the **pesticide label is the law**. In addition, it is a violation of federal law to use any pesticide inconsistent with its labeling. The pesticide label can come in 2 forms. The pesticide label itself refers to information printed on or physically attached to the pesticide container. Any leaflets, brochures or any other material from the pesticide manufacture that is packaged with the pesticide is known as labeling. The very top of the pesticide label will state if the product is a **restricted use pesticide** (figure 1). A restricted use pesticide is any pesticide that could cause harm to humans OR to the environment unless it is applied by certified applicators that have the knowledge to use these pesticides safely and effectively. Only applicators with a Private Applicators Pesticide License, Commercial Applicators Pesticide License, or a Certified Pest Control Operator may apply restricted use pesticides. The pesticide label is usually broken down into 4 sections: 1) Safety information, 2) Environmental information, 3) Product information, and 4) Use information.

Safety Information

One of the very first things listed on the pesticide label is the **Child Hazard Warning** (figure 2). All pesticides by law must have the statement, "KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN." Following the Child Hazard Warning will be the pesticide's **signal words**. The signal words must be in large lettering and indicate the toxicity of the pesticide to humans. The signal words of the pesticide often will help you judge what sort of precautionary measures will be needed to protect yourself and others from pesticide exposures. Pesticides with the signal word CAUTION are slightly or relatively nontoxic. They have a small potential to cause slight skin or eye irritation if any at all. Pesticides with the signal word WARNING are moderately toxic. They are moderately likely to cause acute illness from oral, dermal or inhalation exposure. There are 2 ways in which the signal word DANGER can appear on the label. The first is DANGER without the skull and crossbones. These pesticides are corrosive, cause irreversible eye damage, and are harmful if swallowed. The second form will be DANGER with the skull and crossbones. These are all highly toxic pesticides that will cause acute illness or death from oral, dermal or inhalation exposure. Immediately after the signal words will be the **Statement of Practical Treatment** or **First Aid** section. The First Aid section covers what to do if the pesticide is swallowed, spilled on skin or clothing or splashed into eyes. This section will also have a toll free number for emergency assistance. The next section will be the **Precautionary Statements**. This part will cover whether the pesticide is a hazard to humans and domesticated animals. It will also state how the pesticide can be absorbed into your body and what personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn. The amount of PPE required varies with the toxicity of the pesticide. It will also state which parts of your body need protection. Low toxicity pesticides require basic PPE and long sleeves, gloves, and shoes with socks. Highly toxic pesticides may require a chemically resistant suit and respirator.

Environmental Information

This section will state if the product is toxic to fish, mammals, and aquatic invertebrates. If the pesticide is toxic to fish and aquatic invertebrates the label will state not to apply or dispose the pesticide into any body of water. The environmental information section will also state if the product is toxic to bees and what steps should be taken to minimize bee injury.

Product Information

Brand names are created by the pesticide manufacture. Most brand names are trademarked and cannot be used by other manufactures. Examples would include Roundup™, Remedy™, and GrazonNext™. An important fact to remember is that various manufactures may use different brand names for the same active ingredient. This is common when a pesticide active ingredient has gone off patent. For example, the brand names of Roundup™, Touchdown™, and Rodeo™ are all different brand names for the active ingredient glyphosate. The **active ingredient(s)** are the chemicals in the pesticide that are specifically involved in controlling the pests. All pesticide labels must list the percentage of active and inert ingredients. The **chemical name** is the complex name that identifies the chemical components and structure of the pesticide's active ingredient. The chemical name for the herbicide Pendulum™ is N-(1-ethylpropyl)-3, 4-dimethyl-2, 6-dinitrobenzenamine. Often the chemical name is long and difficult to remember, so the scientific chemical name is simplified to its common name. The common name for the herbicide N-(1-ethylpropyl)-3, 4-dimethyl-2, 6-dinitrobenzenamine is pendimethalin. Usually on the first page of the pesticide label will be the pesticide's EPA **registration number** and **establishment number**. The registration number for the fungicide Quadris™ is 100-1098. The first set of numbers identifies the pesticide manufacture, while the second set refers to the product. The establishment number (100-NE-001 for Quadris™) identifies the plant where the pesticide was manufactured. This is done in case a pesticide ever needs to be recalled, the manufacturing plant can quickly be identified. The name, address, and phone number of the pesticide manufacture is usually found on either the first or last page of the pesticide label.

Use Information

If the pesticide falls under **agricultural use requirements** (figure 3) than the **Worker Protection Standard (WPS)** must be followed when applying the pesticide. The agricultural use requirements will also state the **restricted entry interval (REI)**, which is the amount of time that must pass before agriculture workers are allowed into treated fields. This section will also state what PPE must be worn if there is entry into the field before the REI has expired. The use information section will also state what plants or animals the pesticide may be applied to, how much and how often to apply, what type of equipment is needed for application, what pests will be controlled, and any limitations of the pesticide such as rain or irrigation is needed to activate the product or do not apply the pesticide if temperatures are greater than 85°F.

Pesticide Laws

Pesticides in the Florida are regulated by both United States Environmental protection Agency (EPA) and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACs). Failure to obey the pesticide label or any other pesticide regulations can results in fines up to \$5000 for commercial applicators and \$1000 for private applicators. Fine may be levied for EACH offence. Failure to obey certain pesticide laws can result in criminal prosecution with maximum fines of \$25,000 and/or 1 year in jail for commercial applicators and \$1000 and/or 30 days in jail for private applicators.

Commonly Asked Questions

“May I apply pesticides at higher dosages, higher concentrations, or more frequent applications than is listed on the pesticide label?” No. It is illegal to use the pesticide in any way not permitted by the label.

“May I apply pesticides to a plant, site, or animal not listed on the label?” No. Pesticides can only be used on plants, animals, or sites named in the label

“May I apply a pesticide at less than the labeled rate, frequency, or concentration?” Yes! All pesticides, with the exception of termiticides may be applied at less than the labeled rate.

“May I apply a pesticide against any target pest not listed on the label if the application is to a plant, site or animal on listed on the label?” Yes! Remember, the label applies to the application site not the target pest. As long as the application site is listed on the label you’re fine. The pesticide chosen might not control the pest, but you will not be breaking the law by applying it.



Figure 1



Figure 2

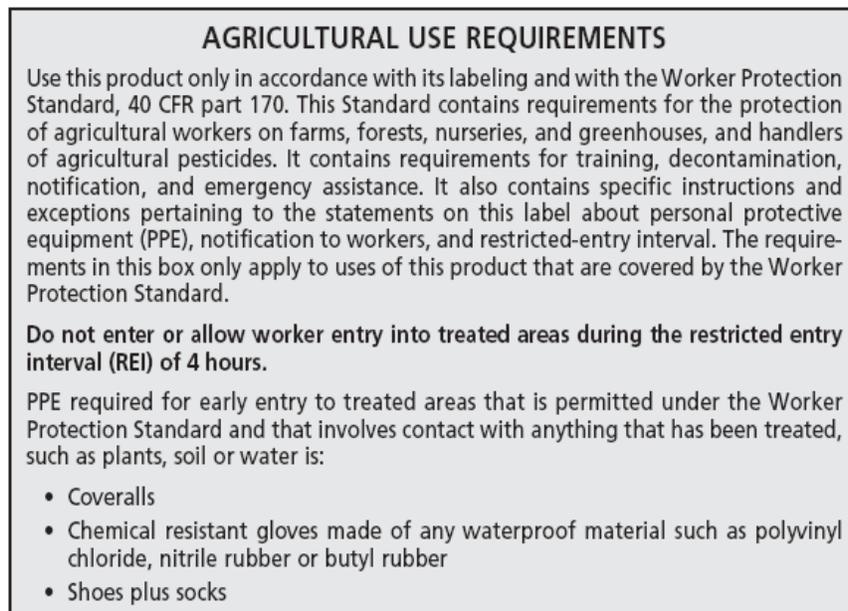


Figure 3

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Barton Wilder".

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