

## Pesticide Container Cleaning and Disposal

Proper rinsing and handling of empty pesticide containers is very important. It:

- Protects humans by removing hazardous materials.
- Prevents sources of environmental contamination.
- Saves you money by putting all the product into the spray tank.
- Makes recycling or disposal of clean containers convenient and inexpensive.

Mishandled empty pesticide containers can create a major problem for their owner since most unrinsed containers are considered hazardous waste, complicating disposal. This brochure explains rinsing and disposal options.

### Safety First!

Before they are rinsed or cleaned, pesticide containers can still hold enough material to harm you or the environment. Protect your eyes and hands when emptying or cleaning containers. Wear chemical-resistant gloves that will neither absorb pesticide or rinsewater, nor let the material contact your skin. Wear goggles or a face shield to protect your eyes from splashes or dust. You may also need to wear a respirator for protection from dust or fumes.

### General Container Handling Guidelines

- Clean the container completely. Use any rinsewater to finish filling the sprayer. If you cannot use the rinsewater, collect it for later use in a spray mix or for disposal. Make sure it is labeled. Save cleaned containers for recycling or dispose of them in a landfill.
- Never abandon empty containers. Uncleaned containers can be very dangerous to people, animals, and the environment. Abandoning containers, even cleaned ones, is against the law.
- Do not bury empty, uncleaned containers or unused product. Even small amounts of pesticide can reach water supplies or contaminate the soil.
- When purchasing pesticides, consider disposal of the container. Manufacturers are putting more products in water-soluble packages or in easily recycled containers to assist you in avoiding disposal problems and costs.

Check with your dealer-distributor and County Solid Waste Program about options for container recycling and landfilling. Northwest Ag Plastics, Inc., and the Washington Pest Consultants Association operates a statewide plastic container recycling program. Many counties and Ag Chem dealers sponsor and help organize these events. Contact NW Ag Plastics (509-457-3850 or 509-930-2335) for more information or visit their web site at [www.nwagplastics.com](http://www.nwagplastics.com)



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington

Hazardous Waste & Toxics  
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## Metal or Rigid Plastic Pesticide Containers

Unless the pesticide label directs you otherwise, triple or multiple rinse containers or use pressure rinsing to clean them. Don't forget to completely rinse the hard-to-get-to areas inside the containers, such as the handle. *Make sure you also rinse the outside of all the containers.*

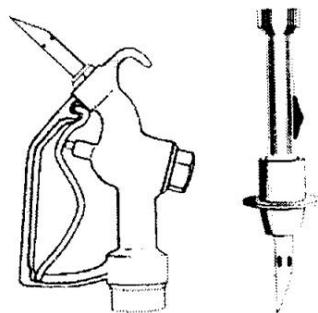
### Triple/Multiple Rinsing:

- Empty as much of the pesticide into the sprayer as possible. Turn five-gallon or smaller containers upside down over the spray tank and let them finish draining for at least 10 seconds after they stop dripping. Pump or drain larger containers as empty as possible.
- Add water or the mixing liquid to fill the empty container about one-fourth full. Shake smaller containers thoroughly. Add the rinsewater to larger containers so that it makes contact with all inside surfaces.
- Drain the container completely by holding it over the spray tank or pumping out the liquid. Add this rinsewater to the spray tank if possible.
- Repeat this process at least two more times, until the container is clean. When triple rinsing will not sufficiently clean the container, keep rinsing until the rinsewater runs clear from the container.

### Pressure Rinsing

This method allows you to continuously wash the inside of the container while draining into the spray tank. It uses a pressure nozzle to puncture and rinse the container in one step. It is easier and more effective than triple/multiple rinsing.

- Empty pesticide into the spray tank. Let it drain for 30 seconds.
- Puncture lower side of pesticide container with pointed nozzle.
- Hold container so that the mouth is over the spray tank. (Make sure cap is removed.)
- Turn on valve to rinse container. Rotate container to rinse all inside surfaces. Rinse until rinsewater is clear.



### Rinsewater

The best thing to do with rinsewater is to use it in the spray mixture you are making up when the container is emptied. This is the safest way for you and the environment. It also creates less waste and cost. If you collect rinsewater for later use or disposal, do not mix different pesticide rinsewaters. Label each container. *Do not dump rinsewater on the ground.*

## Paper or Plastic Sacks and Fiber Containers

### Cleaning

- Empty the contents completely into the application equipment. You may need to cut the container to clean out all of the material in the seams. Never rip the container, but use scissors or a knife (not your personal pocket knife). Wear appropriate personal protective equipment such as gloves, eye protection, and in some cases, a respirator. Do not let material blow around.
- Rinse the container if you can. Some containers have plastic or foil liners that will allow you to rinse them. Use the rinsewater in the spray mixture or collect it for disposal.

### Disposal Options

Recycling pesticide containers helps protect Washington's environment and improves the image of agricultural users in the eyes of the general public. Participating in a recycling program is "Good for Pesticide Users." In addition, it helps the local landfill by reducing the bulk it handles, thus reducing landfill costs.

*Recycling Procedures:* only "pesticide container recyclers" can accept plastic pesticide containers. *Do not take them to urban recycling facilities* where food and beverage containers are accepted.

Only "clean" containers are accepted. Remove caps. They are a different class of plastic and can be disposed of in your normal trash. Remove plastic labels and sleeves; paper labels may remain attached. At collection sites, all containers are inspected inside and outside. Stains are acceptable, but residues are not.

*Landfill Procedures:* only "clean" containers are accepted. Plastic/metal containers must be triple rinsed. Paper containers must be emptied with their seams as clean as possible. Some landfills visually inspect containers and/or require written verification as to the cleanliness of the containers.

- Do not burn paper, fiber, or plastic containers, it is illegal.
- Dirty containers will most likely be a *regulated hazardous waste*.

Unused rinsewater can be a serious disposal problem. If you are unable to use the rinsewater in the original application, apply the rinsewater to a site allowed on the label. If you cannot do this, the rinsewater would most likely be a *regulated hazardous waste*, requiring complicated disposal measures.

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*To ask about available formats for the visually impaired please call the Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program at 360-407-6700. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.*