



Guidelines for reporting chemical trespass incidents

Rural Chemicals Program

Introduction

Agricultural and Veterinary chemicals are important tools in primary production systems. When used correctly, they play a valuable role in maximising the quality and yield of primary produce.

Unfortunately, when chemicals are not applied or disposed of correctly, product integrity, sustainable production practices and human health can be put at risk.

1. Product integrity - The clean and green image of primary produce is threatened if produce is contaminated with chemicals from chemical trespass incidents.

2. Sustainable production practices - The future availability of agricultural and veterinary chemicals is threatened when the environment (water, land, animals) is damaged from chemical trespass incidents.

3. Human health - It is socially unacceptable for the health of workers or neighbours to be threatened by chemical trespass incidents.

The term "**chemical trespass incident**" is used to describe events where agricultural or veterinary chemicals are used or disposed of in a manner that results in the chemical contaminating land, water, animals or plants outside the target area or causing harm to human health or the environment within or outside of the target area. These incidents usually occur when chemicals are used or disposed of in an unacceptably risky manner.

To reduce the causes of unacceptably risky use of chemicals, a chemical trespass management system has been developed. PIRSA Rural Chemicals Program is responsible for this system and has appointed a Chemical Trespass Coordinator to manage reported incidents.

This fact sheet aims to define chemical trespass incidents, indicate the roles of the other agencies involved, and provide clear guidelines on the chemical trespass reporting system.

Chemical trespass incidents

Chemical trespass incidents are events where agricultural or veterinary chemicals have been used or disposed of in a manner that causes:

- Actual or potential contamination of land outside the target area;
- Actual or potential contamination of animals or plants outside the target area;
- Actual or potential harm to the health or safety of human beings (within or outside the target area); and
- Actual or potential environmental harm (within or outside of the target area).

Examples of common chemical trespass incidents include:

- Spray drift or contaminated run-off causing crop contamination;
- Spray drift causing livestock contamination;
- Spray drift, contaminated run-off or unacceptable disposal of unused or waste chemical causing environmental contamination;
- Spray drift impacting on human health.

Guidelines for reporting chemical trespass incidents

Report all chemical trespass incidents to the:

Chemical Trespass Coordinator

P: (08) 8226 0528

F: (08) 8226 1844

E: PIRSA.ChemicalTrespass@state.sa.gov.au

When reporting chemical trespass incidents, the following information should be provided:

- Incident date
- Incident location
- Name & contact details of chemical user
- How chemical was applied (plane, airblast sprayer)
- Weather conditions
- Chemical involved
- Effect from incident (produce/health/environment)

Chemical Trespass Coordinator

PIRSA has appointed a Chemical Trespass Coordinator to deal with chemical trespass incidents. The role of the coordinator will be to:

- Receive all reports of incidents;
- Maintain an up to date database on all incidents;
- Develop and promote educational resources to minimise the risk of future incidents;
- Coordinate appropriate responses to incidents;
- Keep other government departments informed of chemical trespass incidents.

Responses to chemical trespass incidents

After the reporting of an incident to the PIRSA Chemical Trespass Coordinator, the following responses may be initiated (depending on the nature of the report):

- A communication and education response:
 - facilitating communication between neighbours;
 - educating applicator's;
 - utilising local chemical liaison committees;
 - meeting with professional applicator associations.
- Investigation by PIRSA:
 - collection of samples;
 - possible regulatory action.
- Refer incident to other government agency:
 - EPA, DHS, Local Government, Workplace Services.
- Recommend incident referred to solicitors.
- No action (for trivial incidents).

Clarification of Government Department roles

In recent years, an informal system has been in place to deal with chemical trespass incidents. Incidents have been reported to various government agencies including Primary Industries and Resources South Australia (PIRSA), the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Local Government (Councils). Each agency has independently followed up on incidents and cooperation between agencies has occurred without formal guidelines

To provide efficient and productive government service to respond to chemical trespass incidents, it has been agreed that incidents will now be reported to one government agency only.

PIRSA (through the Rural Chemicals Program) is the most appropriate government department to deal with chemical trespass incidents due to its primary role in reducing the causes of unacceptably risky use of chemicals. It will be the gateway for complaints and other observations concerning chemical trespass incidents, coordinating responses and providing education to minimise future incidents.

Other agencies (EPA, DHS, Local Government & Workplace Services) will, for particular adverse outcomes, have responsibility to use their legislated powers to deal with the effects of chemical trespass incidents and will be advised of all incidents that come under their jurisdiction.

Further information

- Agricultural Chemicals – Chemical Resellers, Manufacturers and Private Consultants.
- Training Courses – ChemCert, SMARTtrain and Spray Solutions.
- Reporting spray drift incidents – PIRSA Rural Chemicals Program
ph: 8226 0528 or email:
PIRSA.ChemicalTrespass@saugov.sa.gov.au
- PIRSA Rural Chemicals fact sheets:
www.pir.sa.gov.au/ruralchem

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