

Secure Pesticide Storage: Facility Size and Location¹

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This document identifies and answers two basic questions that typically arise when planning to build a secure pesticide storage facility.

Introduction

Secure storage of pesticides benefits everybody. When done correctly, it is ***safety put into practice***.

Secure storage of pesticides both helps protect Florida's environment and reduces the risk of pesticide theft. It also reduces the chance of your pesticides getting into the hands of vandals and terrorists.

Secure storage is equally important for ***all pesticides*** -- not just those that are highly toxic. Any pesticide in the wrong hands could scare the public if used to commit an act of vandalism or terrorism.

How Much Pesticide Storage Space Should I Plan to Have?

The answer is: ***slightly more than you must have***. The reason for this has two parts:

- *Stored pesticides should never be crowded.* Crowding tends to cause spill accidents. Often, things fall and spill from being bumped or shoved.
- Its extremely difficult to enlarge an existing pesticide storage facility *and keep all of its safety features intact*. For this reason, it's better to build it a little larger to begin with.

Here are two related points worth remembering:

- When it comes to storing pesticide, the less you have to store the better. In fact, ***it's best to store none at all***.
- Stockpiling pesticide is a bad idea. The better plan is to ***promptly use whatever you buy***. This allows you to have a small pesticide storage facility.

So, how big is big enough?

Your pesticide storage facility should have ***at least 10% more space*** than that needed for the largest amount of pesticide ever expected to be stored. In otherwords, if your use history indicates that the most

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you would ever store is 250 containers; make your storage facility big enough to store at least 275.

Where Should Pesticide Storage be Located?

In combination, four main things decide where to put a pesticide storage facility:

- accessibility
- visibility
- terrain
- zoning ordinance

Accessible means *easily gotten to*. A pesticide storage facility needs to be accessible. Locate the storage facility where authorized users can easily work from it. This promotes worker safety.

Make the storage facility accessible to emergency responders. Can a fire truck easily pull up? Can it get to any side? Can a fire truck easily get to nearby buildings? Having 30 feet of easement between the storage facility and other buildings generally gives enough access.

Visibility means *being easily seen*. A pesticide storage facility is nothing to be ashamed of. Do not tuck it in an out-of-the-way place. Instead, put it where you -- and everybody else -- can easily see it.

For security's sake, *a pesticide storage facility is something to be watched*.

- Watched by **you**
- Watched by your **hired help**
- Watched by **law enforcement** officers on patrol

Having your pesticide storage facility in a highly visible location is a strong first step toward pesticide storage security.

Terrain is the *physical features of land*. In Florida, the main land features that affect pesticide storage location include flood plains, highlands, sinkholes, and surface water.

Florida has high annual rainfall. Any low-lying land should be expected to flood. Do not erect a pesticide storage facility on a known flood plain. Avoid such sites. The cost of flood damage is too great. Putting a pesticide storage facility on flood-prone land invites flood damage.

Put a pesticide storage facility on well drained *flat ground*. Not all of Florida is flat -- our state has some hills. But, the top of a hill is a bad place to locate a pesticide storage facility.

Spills flow only downhill. The steeper the grade, the farther the spill will go. Avoiding hilltop sites is a easy way to reduce the amount of land potentially affected by any spill of stored pesticide that happens to escape the storage facility.

Sinkholes are natural pathways to ground water. Never put a pesticide storage facility near a sinkhole.

Florida has lots of surface water (lakes, ponds, rivers, swamps, etc.) Locate your pesticide storage facility so that no free-flow pathway exists between the facility and any nearby surface water.

Zoning ordinances are *locally written, locally enforced, property use laws*. A local (county or city) ordinance **may** (or may not) influence where you can legally locate your pesticide storage facility.

The wording of Florida's Pesticide Law (Chapter 487 Florida Statutes) governs most things having to do with pesticide use in Florida. Most, but not all.

One part of the Florida law (Ch 487 FS) allows local government a chance to control where pesticide storage facilities can be put. Some of Florida's counties/cities choose to write such zoning ordinances. Others do not.

Before you site a pesticide storage facility, **check your local zoning rules**. See if your local government has a zoning ordinance that influences pesticide storage facility location. If so, it must be obeyed.