



# Health and Safety in Farming

## HSNO brief for farmers – Storage of agrichemicals on farms



### Storage of agrichemicals

The agrichemicals you use on your farm need to be stored so that any leak or spill is contained to avoid harm to people, property or the environment.

### Where to start – product lists and hazard classification

Agrichemicals are classed according to their hazards (e.g. whether they are flammable or poisonous to people). The nature of these hazards and the total amount of product you have will influence the way your agrichemicals should be stored.

This means that before you can determine your storage requirements, you need to have an inventory of the products that you use and the quantities you are likely to have at any one time.

You will also need to know the hazardous properties of these products. Product labels and safety data sheets will provide you with this information.

### Store, location and construction

You need to ensure the construction and location of your agrichemical store meets both HSNO and local council regulations.

Your store should be soundly constructed, well ventilated and be in a flood free area. It should be located so that spills will not flow into a stream or waterway.

Stores containing flammable agrichemicals may have additional requirements for fire rating and separation (e.g. at least 20 metres from habitable buildings and 6 metres from combustible materials such as fuel stores and hay barns).

### Licensing requirements

Non flammable agrichemicals do **not** require a location test certificate. A location test certificate is effectively a “site licence” for flammables.

If you do not store large quantities of flammable agrichemicals, or you store them separately from any petrol, you will **not** need a location test certificate.

You will need a location test certificate if you store more than 2,000 litres of flammable products (which includes agrichemicals and any fuels, solvents, etc) in the same place.

If you are storing more than 2,000 litres of flammable materials, particularly where you may have large quantities of petrol, then store the agrichemicals separately from the petrol. If you can reduce each “store” or site to below 2,000 litres, then you will avoid the need for a location test certificate.

*For further information, see Test certificates for fuel stores (Brief 5).*

## Security

Some agrichemicals can be highly poisonous to people. You must keep these secured under lock and key when they are left unattended so that children and unauthorised people cannot get to them.

These poisonous agrichemicals are often tracked. They can only be used by a person:

- who is an approved handler; or
- to whom an approved handler has provided guidance on their safe use and handling **and** an approved handler is present while the substance is being used.

Even for products that are not poisonous, it is good practice to keep all agrichemicals out of the reach of children.

*For further information, see Approved handler test certificates for agrichemicals (Brief 6) and Tracking of agrichemicals (Brief 7).*

## Separation of incompatible substances

Some agrichemicals are not compatible with each other and you need to keep them apart. This will minimise the risk of fire. A common example of incompatible products is flammable and oxidising substances. These products should be separated by a distance of at least 3 metres. Alternatively, you can use non-combustible materials to provide a barrier between them to prevent any inadvertent mixing.

## Controlling spills

If you are using agrichemicals, you need to store them in such a way that any spill can be contained and cleaned up.

If the product is in small (e.g. 5 to 20 litre) containers, drip trays may be sufficient. For storing larger amounts of product, you may need a non-permeable (e.g. concrete) floor that can be cleaned. You may also need a nib wall and lip at any entrance to the store to contain larger spills.

No matter what quantities of agrichemicals you are storing, it is good practice to be able to manage any spill or leak. If a spill occurs, you will need to clean it up and safely dispose of any wastes, including any

materials used in the clean-up. Staff should be trained to deal with spills, and having a spill kit handy is important.

You should never wash away spills into the environment or drains.

*For further information, see Secondary containment on farms (Brief 10), Spillage procedures (Brief 11) and Spill kits (Brief 12).*

## Signage

Your agrichemical store is likely to require signage. Signs need to be clearly visible and should be located at every entrance to the store. Signs must state what the hazards are and what to do in an emergency.

*For further information, see Signage for agrichemical stores (Brief 2).*

## Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers may be required when you store flammable agrichemicals. Whether you need one or more depends on the flammability of the individual products and the total quantity of all the flammable products in the store.

If you are likely to have several different products with varying levels of flammability, adopt a cautious approach and always have at least one fire extinguisher available.

*For further information, see Fire extinguishers (Brief 9).*

## Further information

Best practice for storing agrichemicals can be found in the New Zealand Standard NZS8409:2004; *Management of Agrichemicals*.

The hazardous properties of agrichemicals will be given on product labels and safety data sheets. You can get a safety data sheet for each of the products you use from your agrichemical supplier.

You should also check with your councils to see if they have any requirements in their District or Regional Plans.

Information is also available from the ERMA New Zealand Hazardous Substance Compliance Line 0800 376 234.

