



Commercial sprayers have responsibilities

Commercial growers should notify people of the intention to spray so people can take action to avoid or minimise potential exposure from spray of themselves, their children, or their property.

This is not required when using non-motorised, hand held applicators.

Signs on the road, letter drops and even notices in community newspapers can be required by operators where:

- Motorised equipment is used to spray agrichemicals (tractor driven sprayers /orchard blast sprayers etc).
- Application is by aircraft.
- Spraying is on land that adjoins public land/roadways etc.
- Spraying is on public land, ie roadways, parks.

(See our info sheet Spraying Safely - For commercial operations on farms, orchards, vineyards and lifestyle blocks)



What do you do if spray drift occurs around your home?

Immediately

- Report spray drift to the Regional Council Pollution Response Team 0800 108 838 and provide details of the incident, address, etc. Our staff can respond quickly and provide advice for your safety.
- If you collect water from your roof, or another surface that has been sprayed, disconnect the downpipes to rain water tanks and leave disconnected until the roof has been washed.
- Shower and change your clothing if you have been sprayed.

Follow up

- Wash exposed fruit and vegetables, and any food preparation surfaces.
- Re-wash any washing that was on the clothesline and wash down children's play equipment.
- Visit your doctor if your health has been affected.

Useful information sources

Always check the label and talk to knowledgeable staff at your garden centre or trades supplier.
Ministry for the Environment - www.mfe.govt.nz, search pesticides
Growsafe® - www.growsafe.co.nz

HBRC contact details

Urgent contact for spray drifts,
HBRC Pollution Response 0800 108 838
Compliance team enquiries, 06 835 9200



Spray drift and Spraying

Agrichemicals are useful for keeping weeds, diseases and pests under control. However these need to be used safely and responsibly to protect the environment and commercial markets. This is a guide to living in a horticultural zone.



Spray drift

When spray moves across the boundary and away from the target area (whether it's because of the operator's application methods, local weather or landscape conditions) it is called spray drift.

Spray drift can cause human health problems such as asthma, watery eyes and skin rashes, and pollutes waterways.

Spray drift is easily managed, whether you are using organic or conventional sprays. It requires some planning, and a good eye on the weather conditions.

Spray drift - from both organic and conventional sprays - is an important issue especially in intensive horticultural producing areas like Hawke's Bay. The wider impact of spray drift cannot be underestimated. Overseas and local markets are now more demanding for socially and environmentally responsible production practices, and grower profitability could be affected by consumer pressure.

Rules for the management of spray drift – both conventional and organic sprays - are set in the Regional Resource Management Plan which has been open to public consultation. Organic sprays are not exempt from these rules. A fine or even prosecution can result if there's a breach of rules.

View the Regional Resource Management Plan at: www.hbrc.govt.nz, search #RRMP - refer to Chapter 6, rule 10.

What you need to know about Property Spray Plans

Spray Plans are needed by commercial applications (ie, not domestic) when using machines or aircraft (ie, not using a hand-held appliance) to apply agrichemicals within 50m of a boundary more than 2 times a year.

The plan helps applicators to identify areas sensitive to spray and decide on methods that will minimise spray drift. This should identify the methods of application (hand-held, mechanical, aerial), who is applying the chemical.

The plan will identify sensitive areas and hazards within and surrounding the application area such as:

- Public water supply catchments and intakes
- Rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands, including the riparian margins
- Native bush
- Public areas – cycle trails, walking tracks, parks, reserves, roadside areas
- Organic or other sensitive crops.
- Neighbouring hedges
- Schools, early childhood centres, education camps
- Houses and community facilities,
- Public roads & footpaths.

Ask for a Spray Plan

People living near a commercial grower using sprays regularly have a right to ask for the operator's spray plan.

The plan should help neighbours know what to expect each year from the commercial spraying cycle, and have a say about any risks from the activity. Ideally the spray plan should specify that the operator will apply sprays -

- when the wind is blowing away from sensitive areas
- outside school hours (if near schools)
- at quiet local traffic times (if spraying near a road)
- when neighbours are not home

You can help provide information to a commercial neighbour about sensitive areas on your property that will help them plan to spray safely, eg vegetable gardens, children's play area, or that your water supply is from your roof.

Commercial sprayers must have, or be under the supervision of, someone with GROWSAFE® certification.

Are organic sprays safer?

Although organic materials are considered by many people to be natural, they still contain chemical compounds that can be unpleasant and harmful. Spray drift can still impact on your garden, home and family.

The most common complaints received about organic production are about odour arising from lime sulphur applications. This can create a problem for hours, even days, after its application.

Lime sulphur is considered an organic spray, but can be an irritant to the respiratory system; for asthmatics, the elderly and the sick, this odour can cause breathing difficulties requiring medical treatment.


The chemical can be very unpleasant if it gets onto unprotected skin and can sting the eyes. This may affect people passing the spray operation or neighbours.

Even if the product is natural, the environmental guidelines for air quality in the Hawke's Bay Regional Resource Management Plan requires that there should be no offensive or objectionable odour beyond a property boundary.

When determining whether or not an odour is a problem there are several factors to consider, known as the FIDOL factors:

Frequency - how often the odour occurs
Intensity - how strong the odour is (its concentration)
Duration - how long the odour is in the air
Offensive - how bad (or pleasant) the odour is
Location - where the source of the odour is located.

Lifestyle block owners should read our infosheet **Spraying Safely - For commercial operations on farms, orchards, vineyards and lifestyle blocks.**



Requirements for spraying at home

How you can spray safely

Best practice and Regional Resource Management Plan rules also apply to small applications by home gardens or around properties.

When spraying small amounts non-commercially:

- **Make sure there is no spray drift over your property boundary or into a waterway**
- **Ensure no strong odours will annoy or affect neighbours**
- **Follow the label instructions on the agrichemical container**
- **You do not need a spray plan, but you can still reassure neighbours about the sprays you use.**

Know your agrichemicals

Discuss the best type of spray to use with your agrichemical supplier or in-store specialist.

You can reduce the risks in sensitive areas by choosing a spray which has the lowest toxicity and is the most environmentally friendly, while still controlling the target pest effectively.

Special care may be needed with specific sprays, e.g. hormone based sprays.

Read the label! This seems obvious but too often people don't follow the instructions and that's when things go wrong. Even if you regularly use the spray, check the instructions as these can change, and you need to make sure you are using the spray correctly.

Spray operation tips

- **Apply as close as practical to the target**
- **Check for sensitive areas around your home**
- **Use accurate methods next to waterways**
- **Check the label for the toxicity of the chemical**
- **Follow the directions on the label.**

What should you ask a landowner about their spray plan?

What agrichemicals do you use and when? What effect might they have on the environment? For organic sprays, will it smell, and what odour problems could there be? What does the safety data sheet say about potential health risks?