



About glyphosate

Glyphosate is a chemical used to control weeds. It is a broad-spectrum herbicide that works by inhibiting an enzyme found in plants. Glyphosate-containing substances are perhaps the most common herbicides in New Zealand and world-wide, and are used commercially and around the home. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) has approved glyphosate for use in New Zealand.

The use of glyphosate in New Zealand

Glyphosate substances are used in a wide variety of settings, including orchards, vineyards, pastures, vegetable patches, roadways, parks, sports grounds and home gardens. Glyphosate has been used in New Zealand since 1976 and is currently sold under a large number of different brand names.

Under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996, all hazardous substances, such as glyphosate, require approval by the EPA before they can be used in New Zealand. The EPA has approved approximately 60 substances containing glyphosate under this Act.

The Ministry for Primary Industries' Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines (ACVM) Group had active registrations for 89 glyphosate products under the ACVM Act as of 1 June 2015. (Note: a single HSNO approval can cover more than one ACVM registered product.)

The safety of glyphosate

Based on the EPA's current assessment, people are advised that following the label instructions on all glyphosate products provides adequate protection for users. People should follow the use and safety instructions on all chemical product labels, as these are designed to reduce human exposure to the product and to protect the environment. If the label has been removed or damaged, you can search the manufacturer's website to find the relevant safety information.

How the EPA balances the risks and benefits of glyphosate

The EPA monitors international developments and the latest research available through a wide range of scientific media. In addition to deciding on applications under the HSNO Act to import and manufacture hazardous substances, the EPA also reassesses existing substances to take into account new information.

Reassessments may be initiated by the EPA or by external parties and anyone can apply to have a substance reassessed or reviewed. You can find further details about this on our website.

All glyphosate substances used in New Zealand have been through an approval process, which considers likely impacts on human health and the environment. To reduce the risks posed by glyphosate, we recommend you follow the advice below.

Protect yourself, others, and the environment

Many chemicals we use every day in New Zealand can pose a risk to people or the environment. You can protect yourself, others, and the environment by following the recommendations for using and storing glyphosate.

Using glyphosate safely

When using any chemical, you should start by reading the label. This will tell you the specific risks for the product, and how you can reduce these risks. There are some practices that you should follow any time you use glyphosate:

Before you spray

- Read all instructions on the label and follow them.
- Make sure you are using the right product for the job you are doing.
- Confirm your spray area is not close to water, such as streams, rivers, lakes or ponds.
- Check the weather forecast. Make sure no rain is predicted for at least 24 hours. Avoid spraying when it is windy.
- Clear children and pets from the area, and keep them well away.
- Follow the label advice on the need for protective clothing.

After spraying

- Wash your hands, face and clothing.
- Keep children and pets away until the spray has dried, or for the amount of time indicated on the label.
- Read the instructions on the label to help you safely dispose of any unused product.

Storing glyphosate safely

You should follow these simple recommendations to protect yourself, others, and the environment:

- Keep it locked up and out of reach of children and pets.
- Store the product in its original container.
- Make sure it is kept far away from food, including pet food.
- Dispose of empty herbicide containers and unused herbicides properly.
- Check the label instructions and use-by date before each re-use.

Where can I find out more about glyphosate?

If you need more information, please call 0800 HAZSUBS (0800 429 7827) or email: hazardous.substances@epa.govt.nz.