

## **Agribusiness / Applicators / Homeowners. Suspected pesticide poisonings raise concern over individuals not reading and following the pesticide product label (Monday 3/01/2010).**

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Applicators and homeowners not aware of pesticide product label requirements may be placing themselves, others or the environment at risk. Many pesticide products have low mammalian toxicity which may lead to a false assumption that there is little need to 'read and follow the pesticide product label'. In recent months, the death of 2 children in Utah stresses the importance of following the pesticide product label requirements in all circumstances.

Earlier this month, Rebecca Toone, 4, and her 15 month old sister died after apparently inhaling aluminum phosphide applied commercially near their home to manage rodent populations ([Utah Pesticide Poisoning News Story](#)). It seems this fumigant was applied near the residence of the girls, and the commercial applicator *may* have neglected to read and follow the pesticide product label requirements which clearly describe a minimal distance which must be maintained.

This is not the first time this fumigant has been connected to deaths across the U.S. This fumigant also killed one South Dakota girl in 2000, while sickening a family and killing their 2 year old girl in Lubbock, Texas in 2007 ([Lubbock, Texas News Video](#)). All of these incidents are through apparent misuse of fumigants by not reading and following the product label requirements. DO NOT contract anyone to apply fumigants in or near your home if they are not licensed in the category of 'Industrial, Institutional, Structural and Health-Related Pest Control'. Applicators and homeowners who are in proximity to aluminum phosphide should be aware of the symptoms of pesticide poisoning:

**Mild Poisoning.** Mild inhalation causes feelings of sickness, ringing of ears, fatigue, nausea, and pressure in chest.

**Moderate Poisonings:** Weakness, vomiting, pain above stomach, chest pain, diarrhea, and difficulty breathing.

**Severe Poisonings:** Severe poisonings include fluid in the lungs, blue or purple skin color, unconsciousness, and death.

**Other:** In sufficient quantity, phosphide affects liver, kidneys, lungs, nervous system, and circulatory system.

Call 911 or an ambulance if the person has difficulty breathing. Always call a doctor or poison control center for further advice, even if symptoms are mild. Contact 1-800-308-4856 for assistance with human or medical emergencies.

Surveys conducted in 2009 by the MSU Pesticide Education program indicate 1 in 10 certified applicators do not read the entire product label prior to conducting a pesticide application. In addition, 1 in 3 certified pesticide applicators indicated they have been at least mildly poisoned by a pesticide at some point in their career. Either statistic indicates the need for more vigilance following the product label requirements prior to applying pesticide applications. The pesticide product label will indicate how to safely apply your pesticide product without risking the welfare of yourself, your family or others. You may download free pesticide product labels online ([www.greenbook.net](http://www.greenbook.net)) or contact your local chemical distributor.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Contact the MSU Pesticide Education program regarding this article (Cecil Tharp, Pesticide Education Specialist, at the MSU Pesticide Education Program office (406-994-5067, [ctharp@montana.edu](mailto:ctharp@montana.edu)).