

Code of Best Practice No. 5 Using Pesticides to Control Wasps

This Code of Best Practice doesn't provide exact solutions to the problems of managing wasps but following its practical guidance will help to protect sprayers, members of the public and users of public areas from the potentially harmful effects of pesticides.

The main risks

Pesticides are valuable tools for agricultural production but only when used in a responsible manner. A pesticide is a poison which when misused can cause considerable harm. The main risks when applying pesticides on roads and in public areas are to:

- The person spraying the pesticide, if they don't take care
- Users of the area being sprayed such as children, pets and other animals
- Everyone downstream through contamination of water courses with pesticides

This code of practice is intended to guide you in applying pesticides to avoid these harmful effects.

Who is this code of practice for?

For government employees or members of the public spraying insecticides to treat wasp nests in houses, gardens, agricultural areas and natural areas.

Good practice spraying herbicides on roads and in public areas

- Wasps are **less active** at low temperatures. The best time of day to spray is very early in the morning or last thing at night when it is cooler.
- Protect your **head and hands** with a bee keeper's hat, and thick gloves.
- Avoid moving directly in front of **the nest**, approach it from the side or back. Wasps will react most aggressively to direct approaches.
- Make sure the pesticide is applied so that the **queen in the centre of the nest is killed**, if you only kill some of the workers the nest will still flourish. Use a long-handled spoon for insecticidal powder, or a lance for liquid insecticide. Spraying "Doom" or similar domestic sprays to the outside of the nest is no good.
- Be aware of **traffic hazards** when treating nests near roads, especially near corners. Put out traffic cones or work with an assistant to warn traffic and protect you.
- Areas around **offices or public buildings** should be treated after working hours, to avoid affecting the workers and members of the public.
- **Indoors**, use a domestic "knock-down" fly spray (available at most supermarkets). Avoid spraying food or food preparation surfaces, don't inhale the spray and remember it may also be harmful to household pets and fish.

In each wasp nest there is one breeding queen, all the others are workers, and the aim of treatment is to kill the queen. Wasps are easily confused with bees. Bees are protected due to their important role as pollinators and honey producers.

Things to look out for

- Is it a **wasp or a bee**? Bees are browner and furrer than wasps which have more clearly marked yellow and black stripes. If the problem is bees, a bee keeper will be called to try and collect the swarm, or give permission for their destruction if removal isn't possible.



A bee



A wasp

- Wasps are **aggressive when disturbed** and will sting. This is painful and may cause redness and/or swelling but is not normally serious, unless you are stung around the face, mouth, throat or tongue or suffer an allergic reaction to stings (known as anaphylactic shock). In these cases you should get immediate medical attention.
- Is there a **stream or other water course** nearby? Don't let your pesticides poison the water supplies.

The basics

- Always read the **label** and follow the instructions for dose rate, frequency of application and the personal protective equipment required.
- Choose the correct **nozzle** for the job.
- Make sure you are using the right **personal protective equipment** for the product.
- Don't spray if it is **too windy, too hot or too wet**. You are only wasting effort and money and could cause harm through drift.
- Avoid spraying on steep or very **rough terrain**, the weight of the sprayer can pull you over.
- Dispose of **rinsings** from the knapsack sprayer on or at the edge of the area treated, but avoid exceeding the recommended dose rate on the target itself.
- Store pesticides in a **lockable store** away from food stuffs, and out of the reach of children and pets.

Advice and further information

- Contact the Environmental Health Department on 22500 for wasp control in buildings, offices and within the boundaries of domestic premises. Contact the Pest Control Services Officer at ANRD on 24724 for wasp control in all other areas.
- Wiki how on wasp and bee control: <http://www.wikihow.com/Category:Bee-and-Wasp-Control>