



Safely using insecticides containing methamidophos on plants



Methamidophos is toxic

Methamidophos is an organophosphate that is an active ingredient in some insecticides to control thrips and tomato/potato psyllid. However, methamidophos is very toxic to both people and the environment. You should only use methamidophos if there are no safer alternatives and as part of an integrated pest management system (IPM).

Products that contain methamidophos

The product label of the insecticides you use will list the active agents. Check the label to see if methamidophos is one of the actives. If it is, you need to follow the practices outlined in this document.

Insecticides on the market that are known to contain methamidophos include **Metafort 60SL** and **Methafos 600**.

This document contains

This document provides guidance for people using methamidophos-containing insecticides for plant protection. It incorporates information about both the old and the new rules for using methamidophos and provides guidance on protecting your health, the health of others and the environment.

There are other rules about storing and disposing of these products safely that you must also follow but are not included in this document.

For all of the rules that apply to methamidophos, check the controls for approved hazardous substances database on our website.

✚ Protect your health

You need to take extra care when using methamidophos so that you are exposed to as little of the product as possible.

- While using the product you must wear the right safety gear – this is explained in more detail under the heading *Wear the right safety gear*.
- After using methamidophos you must wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before eating, drinking, chewing gum, smoking or using the toilet. If you don't, you will end up consuming some of the insecticide, which can cause long-term health problems.
- Once you have finished using methamidophos for the day remove the clothes you were working in, have a shower or bath with soap and water, shampoo your hair, and put on clean clothes.
- Wash your work clothes separately from other clothes before wearing them again.



Wear the right safety gear

Because of the toxicity of methamidophos you must wear the right safety gear to protect your health. If you are an employer, you must provide your staff with this gear and train them to wear it properly.

The new rules specify that full personal protective equipment (PPE) and respiratory protective equipment (RPE) (see box below) must be worn when mixing, loading or applying methamidophos.

The product label and safety data sheet will give you information about what PPE and RPE you must wear when handling the product. If you can't find this information, call the supplier of the product or contact the Health and Safety Group at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment during business hours on 0800 20 90 20.

Protect yourself – with full PPE

When using methamidophos you must wear:

- chemical resistant coveralls
- chemical resistant gloves
- chemical resistant footwear plus socks
- protective eyewear
- chemical resistant headgear.

And RPE

You must also wear appropriate respiratory protective equipment to protect against breathing in the substance in dust, mist, gas or vapour forms.

After wearing PPE make sure you clean it according to the manufacturer's instructions before you, or anyone else, wears it again.

If the insecticide label offers specific instructions on how to clean the PPE, follow those instructions.

If there are no instructions available you should wash the PPE in detergent and hot water. The person washing the PPE should wear gloves when handling it.

Applying methamidophos while in an enclosed cab

If you apply methamidophos using a vehicle and you are in a fully enclosed cab that prevents contact with methamidophos you are not required to wear full PPE. The enclosed cab must totally surround the person in the cab and be equipped with a functioning ventilation system that protects the person inside the cab from dust, mist and volatile organic compounds. The cab must be maintained frequently and according to the manufacturer's instructions.



However, even if you apply methamidophos using an enclosed cab you must wear coveralls so that your skin is not exposed and socks and shoes. You must also have full PPE and RPE available so that you can put it on if you need to get out of the cab in an area where methamidophos has been applied (for example if you need to get out to unblock nozzles). Before re-entering the cab you will need to take off the PPE and RPE and store them in chemical resistant containers to prevent the cab becoming contaminated with insecticide and to stop the RPE filters from continuing to absorb contaminants.

Always have a safety data sheet (SDS) available for your products. Information about what to do in the event of a poisoning is usually given in Section 4 of the SDS.



Monitor your health

Wearing personal protective equipment does not eliminate exposure to a hazardous substance. If you are an employer and your staff are using organophosphates, such as methamidophos, you are required under the Health and Safety in Employment (HSE) Act to monitor your staffs' exposure to organophosphates and, with their informed consent, monitor their health.

This monitoring is usually done by a health service provider such as an occupational health nurse or general practitioner with a qualification in occupational health.

For further information on how to set up a monitoring regime see the information sheet *Organophosphates: health effects, monitoring and first aid* on the www.business.govt.nz/healthandsafetygroup website.



Methamidophos is toxic to the environment

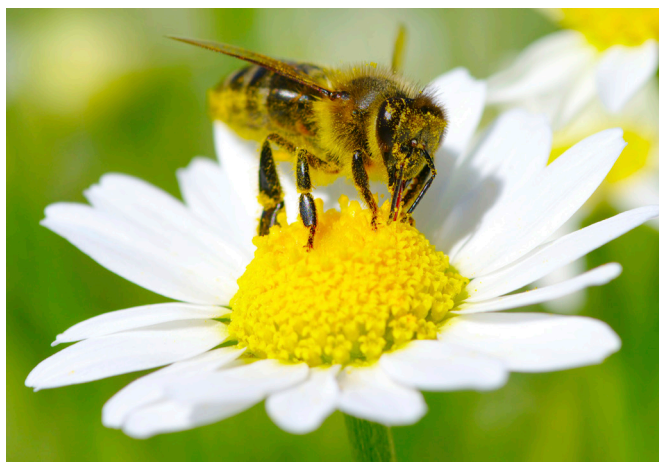
Methamidophos is very toxic to the environment, especially to insects, birds, fish and other aquatic creatures.

You must not apply methamidophos into or onto water.

Protect bees

Methamidophos is toxic to bees. You must not spray methamidophos where bees are foraging or onto any flowering plants, including weeds.

If you spray methamidophos on non-flowering plants that are close to other plants in flower you must only spray in the late evening when bees have stopped working.



Applying methamidophos

Approved handler

You must be an approved handler or be under the direct supervision of an approved handler to handle any insecticide containing methamidophos.

Application amount and frequency

From 1 July 2015, methamidophos products can be applied at a maximum rate of 900 g of methamidophos per hectare.

Notification requirements

Before using wide-dispersive methods such as a boom sprayer or aerial application, you must notify anyone that could potentially be affected. People affected could include occupiers and owners of land, homes or property that share a boundary with the property where you are applying the product.

You must notify people in writing at least two working days before each application but no earlier than four weeks prior to applying methamidophos.

The notification must include the following information:

- where the substance will be applied
- the date and approximate duration of each application
- how to avoid exposure (for example, closing windows and doors, staying indoors during application and bringing laundry indoors)
- the name of the organisation(s) undertaking the application
- contact details for the person in charge of the application (phone, email or postal address, including a contact number for immediate contact during application).

Avoiding spray drift

When applying methamidophos outdoors you must take all practical steps to avoid spray drifting onto neighbouring properties and sensitive areas. Sensitive areas might be places where people are present or where native animals and plants are found.

Practical tips to reduce spray drift

- Don't spray if it's windy
- Increase the droplet size of your spray to reduce the distance the spray is likely to travel
- Lower the height of release booms – this also reduces the distance the spray travels
- Establish a buffer zone between your property and sensitive areas. A buffer zone is a no-spray area between where you apply a substance and neighbouring properties or sensitive areas
- Shelter belts, such as hedges, can reduce the distance spray is likely to drift by acting as a physical barrier. The presence of a shelter belt may reduce the required buffer zone.

For further guidance on spray drift management and the safe use of agrichemicals refer to NZS 8409:2004 Management of Agrichemicals.

Taking these practical steps is particularly important when you apply methamidophos using wide-dispersive methods such as by aerial application or boom sprayer.



Record how you reduce spray drift

You also need to record the measures you have taken to reduce spray drift when applying methamidophos containing products. You can include this information in your spray diary.

Your record must include:

- The name of the substance
- The date and time of each application
- The classification(s) of the substance
- The amount of the substance applied
- The location the substance was applied
- If the substance is applied to or discharged into the air, a description of the wind speed and direction when the application took place
- The name of the user of the substance and the user's address
- Details of measures taken to ensure that there is no harm caused to neighbouring properties or sensitive areas

These records must be kept for at least three years after applying methamidophos.

Don't enter the treated area for 48 hours

The new rules prohibit people entering the area where methamidophos has been applied for 48 hours unless they are wearing full personal protective and respiratory protective equipment. This period of time is sometimes called a restricted entry interval (REI) and is to protect peoples' health from any methamidophos still present on plants or in the air.

The 48 hour time period starts when the application is complete and, if applied indoors, the ventilation system is switched on.

If methamidophos was applied indoors you can only enter the building within that 48 hour period to carry out tasks associated with ventilation.

Approval expires 1 July 2023

Because of the toxic nature of methamidophos, the approval is time limited. After 1 July 2023, methamidophos can no longer be imported or manufactured in New Zealand and safer alternatives must be used in place of methamidophos.

Contact Us

For further information contact the EPA Hazardous Substances Information line on **0800 376 234** or email hsinfo@epa.govt.nz