

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**AGRICHEMICAL HANDLING FACILITY**

(No.)

**CODE 309**

**DEFINITION**

A facility with an impervious surface to provide an environmentally safe area for the handling of on-farm agrichemicals.

**PURPOSE**

To provide a safe environment on farm and ranch operations for the storage, mixing, loading and cleanup of agrichemicals, retain incidental spillage, retain leakage, and to reduce pollution to surface water, groundwater, air, and/or soil.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

This practice applies where:

- The handling of agrichemicals creates significant potential for pollution of surface water, groundwater, air or soil and a facility is needed to properly manage and handle the chemical operation;
- An adequate water supply is available for filling application equipment tanks, rinsing application equipment and chemical containers as needed for the operation;
- Soils and topography are suitable for construction.

This standard does not apply to the handling or storage of fuels. This standard does not apply to commercial or multi-landowner agrichemical handling operations.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applies to All Purposes**

Plan, design and construct agrichemical

handling facilities to meet all federal, tribal, state and local regulations.

The size of the agrichemical storage will be based on the agrichemical use of the farm needed for a single growing season averaged over the last 5 years or as specified by pesticide regulations.

The pad, hoses, pipes, valves, seals, connectors, filters, tanks, and related plumbing material must be compatible with the chemicals being handled and capable of withstanding the intended use.

Outlet drains are not permitted in the agrichemical collection, storage or handling areas.

Posts, pipes, hoses, discharge valves, or other devices may not pass through the floor, containment storage walls, or the sump.

When more than 60 gallons of Class I, II, or III flammable or combustible liquids or a single storage container larger than 5 gallons of Class I, II, or III flammable or combustible liquids are stored in an agrichemical handling facility, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 30, Flammable and Combustible Liquids Code, Chapter 4, shall be followed. Storage cabinets or other remedies must be installed.

When the agrichemical handling facility is also used for agrichemical storage, provide sufficient space and designate a separate room or area.

**Criteria for Permanent Facilities**

**Location.** Locate the agrichemical handling facility as follows:

- Adjacent to or as near the chemical storage building as practical when chemical storage is not incorporated into the facility;

- As far as practical from streams, ponds, lakes, wetlands, sinkholes, and water wells, with a minimum setback distance of 100 feet;
- Isolated and located downwind from residences and other buildings used to store feed, seed, petroleum products, or livestock with a minimum distance as required by local regulations;
- At sites that have not been used as stationary mixing/loading sites in the past.

Locate the bottom of the facility a minimum of two feet above the seasonal high water table.

Locate above the 100-year floodplain elevation. However, if site restrictions require location within a floodplain, protect from inundation and damage from the 25-year flood event, or larger if required by laws, rules, and regulations.

Measures shall be included to divert runoff from adjacent areas resulting from a 100-year, 24 hour duration storm event.

**Storage Capacity.** Provide a minimum storage volume on the chemical-handling pad of 250 gallons or 1.25 times the volume of the largest storage or spray tank on the pad, whichever is greater.

For unroofed facilities provide storage on the pad as stated above or the volume of the 25-year, 24-hour storm, whichever is greater. Provide a means of storing or field applying, according to chemical label directions, the full storage volume within the 72-hour period following the storm.

**Rinsate Tanks.** Provide rinsate tanks of adequate number and size as needed for the type of operation, allowing for separation of non-compatible chemicals. The material type shall be suitable for the type of chemical to be contained in the tank.

**Manufactured Components.** Manufactured tanks and components shall be structurally sound, capable of withstanding all anticipated loads, and constructed of suitable materials for their intended use. Tanks will be sized based on a single farm owner or operator agrichemical need.

**Pump.** The pump shall be properly anchored and be corrosion resistant.

**Storage tank(s).** Provision shall be made for storage containment volume of the AHF. This volume may be provided with storage tank(s) dedicated to this purpose used alone or in combination with spray equipment tanks or other farm tanks that are reliably available.

**Chemical Handling Pad.** Size the pad to accommodate the largest spraying equipment. Equipment access is allowed from more than one direction. Provide adequate space for maneuvering around equipment, a minimum of 2 feet for open facilities and 4 feet for enclosed facilities. When practical base the minimum width of the mixing pad on the width of the spray equipment with the booms retracted.

The concrete pad shall be designed with a positive slope of at least 2 percent (1/4 inch per foot) from all areas toward the catchment sump.

The concrete pad shall be curbed at its edges to prevent runoff and run-on.

**Flexible Membrane Liners.** All flexible membranes shall be certified by the manufacturer to be suitable for the intended use.

Design of the flexible membrane shall be in accordance with manufacturer recommendations. All flexible membrane installations shall meet the material and installation requirements of the plans and specifications provided for each installation and shall be certified by the installer.

Minimum Thickness for Membranes	
Type	Minimum Thickness
HDPE	40 mil thickness
LLDPE	40 mil thickness
PVC	30 mil thickness
RPR	45 mil thickness
EPDM	45 mil thickness

HDPE = High Density Polyethylene  
 LLDPE = Linear Low Density Polyethylene  
 PVC = Polyvinyl Chloride  
 RPR = Reinforced Polypropylene  
 EPDM = Ethylene propylene diene monomer (synthetic rubber)

Liners shall be designed to withstand hydrostatic head and anticipated traffic loads. The coating or liner shall be flexible enough to bridge joints and provide watertightness.

Exposed surfaces of the agrichemical handling facility will be designed to resist penetration and absorption of contaminated waters. An impervious coating or liner is required for secondary containment facilities constructed out of earth, concrete blocks or similar materials. For cast in place concrete walls and floors, an impervious coating or liner is not required.

**Concrete Surfaces.** To protect the surfaces of concrete, that are exposed to agrichemicals, from penetration and contamination all concrete must have an admixture for concrete meeting the requirements of ASTM C1240 (micro silica), ASTM C618 (fly ash) or ASTM C989 (ground blast furnace slag), be sealed with a chemically resistant non-vapor barrier forming coating, or take measures to prevent vapor formation under the concrete sealed with a chemically resistant coating. Coatings must be compatible with the agrichemicals used at the facility and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

**Agrichemical Collection.** The catchment sump provides the facility a collection point for spillage, rinsate, sediment, and other debris. Its size should be kept to the minimum necessary to serve the purpose. The catchment sump shall be watertight and constructed of non-corrodible material such as monolithically-poured concrete, plastic, coated steel and fiberglass. It shall be covered with corrosion resistant grating of sufficient size to allow access for cleaning. Design loadings for the grate shall be the wheel loads used in design of the pad.

**Roof.** The roof, if provided, shall cover the entire AHF and shall extend sufficiently to prevent precipitation from accumulating on the concrete pad.

The minimum clearance between the lowest chord of the roof and highest area on the concrete pad shall provide clearance for the spray equipment.

Provide a collection area or sump with adequate dimensions for sediment removal and pump operation.

**Structural Design.** For the structural design, address all items that will influence the performance of the structure, including loading assumptions, storage tanks, material properties, and construction quality. Indicate design assumptions and construction requirements on the plans.

When using a roof/building to cover the facility, use minimum snow and wind loads as specified in ASCE 7, *Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures*.

Locate footings below the anticipated frost depth unless measures are designed to accommodate frost/freeze conditions.

Fabricated structures shall be designed according to the criteria in the following references as appropriate:

- Timber - *National Design Specifications for Wood Construction*, American Forest and Paper Association;
- Steel – *Manual of Steel Construction*, AISC, American Institute of Steel Construction;
- Concrete - *Building Code Requirements for Reinforced Concrete*, ACI 318, American Concrete Institute;
- Masonry - *Building Code Requirements for Masonry Structures*, ACI 530, American Concrete Institute;
- Slabs – Use a five (5) inch minimum concrete slab thickness. Base the required area of reinforcing steel on the subgrade drag theory in accordance with American Concrete Institute, ACI 360, *Design of Slabs-on-Grade*. When heavy loads are to be resisted and/or where a non-uniform foundation cannot be avoided, use an appropriate design such as ASAE EP514 "Design of Concrete Structures for Secondary Containment of Liquid Pesticides and Fertilizers", and procedure incorporating a subgrade resistance parameter(s) such as ACI 360.

**Water Supply.** Provide an adequate water supply for mixing agrichemicals, rinsing tanks and containers, and for emergency health and safety needs as appropriate for the facility. Provide all pipelines, hoses, backflow prevention and other hardware as needed.

**Piping.** Piping shall be made of corrosion resistant materials. Piping and pump(s) used for transfer of contaminated water shall be designed for ease of inspection and replacement. To this end, piping and pump(s) shall be located above the grade of the concrete pad and catchment basin to the greatest extent possible. Design shall also consider recovery leakage from piping should it occur by locating it within the boundaries of the concrete pad or by other means.

A principal backflow prevention valve that complies with local plumbing codes shall be installed as close to the pad as possible on the main clean water line serving the pad before cross connecting with contaminated sources or other non-potable water supplies. Backflow prevention devices shall also be installed between the pump and the storage tank(s) and between the storage tank(s) and spray equipment.

Piping and pumps(s) shall be designed to facilitate drainage for winter shutdown.

**Safety.** Design shall include appropriate safety features to minimize the hazards of the facility. Provide warning signs, emergency eyewash station and other devices as appropriate, to ensure the safety of humans. Provide adequate ventilation at all times for enclosed buildings using natural or mechanical means.

The agrichemical handling facility and appurtenances shall be secured to provide reasonable protection from wildlife, vandalism, and unauthorized access at all times. The container and appurtenances may be secured using fencing, lighting or locks.

**Vegetation.** Stabilize disturbed areas, as necessary, to prevent erosion, in accordance with the conservation practice standard for Critical Area Planting, Code 342.

#### **Criteria for Portable Facilities**

The portable agrichemical handling facility is a manufactured portable device that can be easily moved from field to field and will meet the needs of the user.

**Pad.** The pad shall be constructed of durable material that is chemically resistant for the intended agrichemicals. The minimum

containment capacity of the pad is 1.25 times the volume of the largest individual agrichemical container or tank that will be located on the pad. Include a sump or other provisions for easy recovery of spilled liquid.

**Rinsing Devices.** Design rinse devices so that residual contents of agrichemical containers can be adequately rinsed directly from the container to the spray tank. Design the rinse system to operate from the nurse tank discharge pump or a separate pump that provides adequate pressure. Verify with the manufacturer of the facility that any pump to be used in pressure rising is compatible with the rinse device.

#### **CONSIDERATIONS**

For permanent facilities, the agrichemical handling facility may cause an increase in water use at the site from the mixing of agrichemicals and rinsing of agrichemical sprayers, containers and agrichemical-handling pad.

Consider providing a roof over permanent facilities.

Consider installing an apron at the facility entrance to minimize sediment transport onto the pad.

Consider providing a mixing platform for filling agrichemical sprayers.

For portable handling facilities consider using a top/bottom-loading valve with built-in check valve in the hose from the nurse tank to the spray tank. This will enable the operator to remain on the ground while filling the sprayer.

#### **Cultural Resources**

NRCS policy is to avoid any effect to cultural resources and protect them in their original location. Determine if installation of this practice or associated practices in the plan could have an effect on cultural resources. The National Historic Preservation Act may require consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer.

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cultural.html> is the primary website for cultural resources information. The California Environmental Handbook and the California Environmental Assessment Worksheet also provide guidance on how the NRCS must account for cultural

resources. The e-Field Office Technical Guide, Section II contains general information, with Web sites for additional information.

Document any specific considerations for cultural resources in the design docket and the Practice Requirements worksheet.

### **Endangered Species**

If during the Environmental Assessment NRCS determines that installation of this practice, along with any others proposed, will have an effect on any federal or state listed Rare, Threatened or Endangered species or their habitat, NRCS will advise the client of the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and recommend alternative conservation treatments that avoid the adverse effects. Further assistance will be provided only if the client selects one of the alternative conservation treatments for installation; or with concurrence of the client, NRCS initiates consultations concerning the listed species with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and/or California Department of Fish and Game.

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Prepare plans and specifications for constructing agrichemical mixing facilities in accordance with the criteria contained in this standard, to achieve its intended use.

Portable agrichemical handling facilities are manufactured items. Review plans and specifications submitted by the manufacturer to ensure that the proposed facility meets the requirements of this standard.

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

An operation and maintenance (O&M) plan shall be developed that is consistent with the purpose of the practice, the intended design life, safety requirements, design criteria, and all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

The O&M Plan is to address the following:

- Brief description of the facility. Define parameters used to size and design the facility such as storage tank and equipment sizes.

- The facility shall not be used for purposes other than the storing, mixing, loading, cleaning, and maintenance of materials and equipment used for agrichemical application.
- An inventory of agrichemicals to be stored or handled at the facility. Material Safety Data Sheets may be included in the plan.
- The proposed method of handling and disposing of rinsate, washwater, and spills.
- A process for handling accumulated rainfall within the 72 hour timeframe following the storm.
- A process for handling accumulated sediment.
- A strategy for cleaning surfaces between different agrichemical mixing operations.
- An inspection plan of structural components such as the condition of concrete, curbing, sump, access roads, building structure, etc. Note the timing of inspections, conditions that would cause concern, and required actions as appropriate.
- Any weekly, monthly, or annual maintenance that may be necessary for the proper functioning of the system components including, but not limited to, concrete surfaces, sumps, pumps, hoses, pipelines, building materials, electrical equipment, and other materials and equipment.
- A schedule of any required written inspection and maintenance reports.
- Proper winterization of the facility.
- Required safety signage.
- An Emergency Response Plan with safety procedures in the event of an accidental spill, exposure, fire, or other hazardous incident. Provide a list of safety equipment, contact names, and phone numbers.

## REFERENCES

- American Concrete Institute, *ACI codes*, Detroit, MI.
- American Forest and Paper Association, *National Design Specifications for Wood Construction*, Washington, DC.
- American Institute of Steel Construction, *AISC, Manual of Steel Construction*, Chicago, IL.
- American Society of Agricultural Engineers, ASAE EP514, *Design of Concrete Structures for Secondary Containment of Liquid Pesticides and Fertilizers*, St. Joseph, MI.
- American Society of Civil Engineers, ASCE 7, *Minimum Design Loads for Buildings and Other Structures*, Reston, VA.
- Daum, D. R., and D. J. Meyer. *Pesticide Storage Building*. Pennsylvania State University, Agricultural Engineering Department.
- Doane's Agricultural Report. *Chemical Containment Facilities*. Vol. 53, No 36-5.
- Midwest Plan Service, 1995. *Designing Facilities for Pesticide and Fertilizer Containment MWPS-37*, Ames, IA.
- Kammel, D. W., 1988. *Protective Treatment for Concrete*. Agricultural Engineering Department, University of Wisconsin.
- Noyes, R. I., 1989. *Modular Farm Sized Concrete Agricultural Chemical Handling Pads*. Oklahoma State University, Agricultural Engineering Department.
- Noyes, R. T., and D. W. Kammel, 1989. *A Modular Containment, Mixing/Loading Pad*. ASAE Paper No 891613, American Society of Agricultural Engineers, Winter Meeting, New Orleans, LA.
- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, *Critical Area Planting*, Code 342, Conservation Practice Standards.