

Consumer Product Safety

ARCHIVED - Evaluation of Pesticide Incident Report 2011-4967

 This content was archived on June 24 2013.

Archived Content

Information identified as archived on the Web is for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It has not been altered or updated after the date of archiving. Web pages that are archived on the Web are not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards. As per the [Communications Policy of the Government of Canada](#), you can request alternate formats on the "[Contact Us](#)" page.

Background

Pest control products are only registered by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) for use if there is reasonable certainty that no harm to human health or the environment will result from exposure to, or use of the product as directed on the label. Health Canada collects incident reporting data under the authority of the *Pest Control Products Act*. If a pesticide manufacturer receives information about an incident involving one of their products, they are required by law to submit that information to Health Canada. Members of the public may also submit information about an incident directly to Health Canada. It is important to note that the information presented in incident reports reflects the observations and opinion of the person reporting it, and does not include any assessment by Health Canada, nor does it confirm an association between the pesticide and the effects reported.

Health Canada considers the reported information to determine if there are potential health or environmental risks associated with a pesticide and, if necessary, takes corrective action. Such action could range from minor label changes to discontinuation of the product.

Incident Report 2011-4967

An incident report was submitted to the PMRA on October 18, 2011 involving the product Roundup WeatherMAX with Transorb 2 Technology Liquid Herbicide (PCP Reg. No. 27487) containing the active ingredient glyphosate. According to the report, an elderly male had been outside of his home while the product was applied on the adjacent property. The individual complained of a sore throat and chest pains for several days afterward. He was hospitalized at an unknown time after the application. He was diagnosed with colon cancer, a bowel obstruction, and kidney failure, and passed away approximately two months after the application. According to the report, the doctor had indicated that the person likely had the colon cancer for about 10 years.

In accordance with the *Pest Control Products Incident Reporting Regulations* classification system, this incident was classified as Human Death. This incident report is available through the PMRA electronic  [Public Registry](#) on the Health Canada Web site.

Health Canada Evaluation

In this incident, the potential for exposure to the pesticide product is extremely low. The product is diluted in water prior to application, and glyphosate has a low tendency to evaporate into the air.

The pesticide application in this case was conducted outdoors on a neighbouring property, further reducing the potential for exposure.

The effects reported are also not expected following exposure to glyphosate. Glyphosate is considered to have relatively low toxicity, particularly by the inhalation route. While inhalation of glyphosate products can result in irritation of the respiratory tract, such symptoms are not expected to persist as they did in this incident. Exposure to low levels of glyphosate is also not expected to result in any serious effects, including cancer. There is no evidence that glyphosate has the potential to cause cancer in laboratory animals. Furthermore, studies involving pesticide applicators have not found an association between occupational exposure to glyphosate and an increased risk of colon cancer. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, colon cancer is the third most common form of cancer in Canada, and is the second leading cause of cancer death in Canada. It is associated with several risk factors, primarily age, family history, and diet.

Health Canada Conclusion

Based on the available information, it was concluded that it is **unlikely** that the effects reported in this incident were associated with exposure to glyphosate. This conclusion is supported by the low potential for exposure in this incident, the relatively low toxicity of glyphosate, the evidence suggesting that glyphosate does not have the potential to cause cancer, and the fact that the cancer was likely present prior to the reported exposure.

More information about the [Pesticide Incident Reporting Program](#) is available on the Health Canada Web site. Should you require further information please contact the [Pesticide Incident Reporting Program](#).

Date Modified: 2011-11-01