Protecting the **Enviroment**

The essentials for storing liquid fertilisers

Nitrasol™

Environment Agency

aic agricultural industries confederation

Losses from Stored Fertiliser May:

- Seriously damage water quality
- Lead to substantial fines for pollution

Today, farm storage of fertilisers is covered by Codes of Practice to prevent water pollution. Unless farmers adhere to these codes, enforcement action could be taken or new legislation imposed.(1) This leaflet summaries your obligations under the Codes.

Adhering to the codes is not daunting. Often a little time spent on inspection, planning and a small investment in maintenance will avoid large fines, upset neighbours and loss of reputation.

General Guidelines for All Stores

Site all stores as far from watercourses or surface water drains as possible – never less than 10m.

Site at least 50m from any well, borehole, or aquifer outcrop where risk of groundwater contamination is high.

Provide secondary containment for storage where liquids are stored or if contamination risk is high.

Ensure good well constructed vehicular access.

Site all stores away from public access to minimise interference or vandalism.

Ensure operators are trained in use and emergency procedures.

Obtain Code of Practice for the Prevention of Water Pollution from the Storage and Handling of Fluid and Solid Fertilisers(2) – the definitive reference.

Fluid Fertiliser Storage

Farmers share a duty of care for siting, use and maintenance, even when fertiliser suppliers provide tanks.

Using tanks

Ensure tanks, pipework and valves are fit for purpose, ie resistant to corrosion.

Ensure all tank fittings are tamper-proof. Lock all valves shut when not in use.

Ensure delivery companies are aware of emergency procedures.

Ensure tank, pipework and valves are in good condition before deliveries are made.

Check tank has sufficient capacity before delivery.

Avoid overfilling.

Maintaining tanks

Have tanks, pipework and valves inspected internally and externally, for damage and corrosion at least annually by a suitably qualified technician.

Carry out any necessary remedial work immediately.

Undertake additional checks at the start of the season and when deliveries are made to and from the tank(3). If in doubt do not use the tank or bowser.

Drain down and flush through all pipework at the end of each season.

Keep a maintenance record.

Bowsers and Mobile Tanks

Temporary storage can pose a significant hazard to watercourses. Thus suitable siting is crucial before filling or dispensing. Transport around the farm needs careful consideration. Roadways and tracks must be able to withstand fully laden bowsers passing over or being parked on them.

Ensure bowsers and all fittings are fit for purpose and protected from corrosion.

Ensure bowsers are set down on level, solid ground before delivery is made.

Provide sufficient support beneath parking legs to carry loaded weight without it sinking into the ground or becoming unstable.

Ensure all hatches and manholes form a watertight seal when closed.

Do not move laden bowser unless all hatches, lids and valves are closed and locked.

Open hatches slightly, when emptying bowsers, to avoid a vacuum which could cause the tank to crumple and collapse.

Permanent Storage

Conduct an environmental risk assessment(4). Advice is available from the Environment Agency.

Ensure liquid fertiliser storage tanks have appropriate secondary containment. Use of reinforced masonry or concrete is recommended and provision should be made for at least 110% of tank capacity. All pipes, valves and sight gauges should be within the containment area.

Tanks must be on a solid, stable concrete base of footing to take the weight of the full storage tank and full bund.

Consider additional stabilisation against high winds for GRP tanks.

Footnote

1. The Anti-Pollution Works Regulations 1999, www.legislation.gov.uk or from The Stationery Office, T: 0870 6005522
2. Code of Practice for the Prevention of Water Pollution from the Storage and Handling of Fluid and Solid Fertilisers – free from Agricultural Industries Confederation, T: 01733 385230 or from website www.agindustries.org.uk
3. Instructions for inspecting condition of fluid fertiliser tanks (free) – Agricultural Industries Confederation 01733 385230 or from website: www.agindustries.org.uk.
4. Risk assessment guide on siting storage facilities (free) – Agricultural Industries Confederation 01733 385230 or from website: www.agindustries.org.uk.

Working in Partnership to Prevent Pollution

Environment Agency – 24 hour Emergency Hotline 0800 807060
For non-emergency general advice, phone 03708 506506