The WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard and Guidelines to Classification 2009



International Programme on Chemical Safety

IOMC INTER-ORGANIZATION PROGRAMME FOR THE SOUND MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS A cooperative agreement among FAO, ILO, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, WHO & OECD



The WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard

and

Guidelines to Classification 2009

WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

World Health Organization.

The WHO recommended classification of pesticides by hazard and guidelines to classification: 2009.

1. Pesticides – toxicity. 2. Pesticides – classification. 3. Hazardous substances – classification. 4. Guidelines. I. International Programme on Chemical Safety. II. Title.

ISBN 978 92 4 154796 3 ISSN 1684-1042 (NLM classification: WA 240)

© World Health Organization 2010

All rights reserved. Publications of the World Health Organization can be obtained from WHO Press, World Health Organization, 20 Avenue Appia, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland (tel.: +41 22 791 3264; fax: +41 22 791 4857; e-mail: bookorders@who.int). Requests for permission to reproduce or translate WHO publications – whether for sale or for noncommercial distribution – should be addressed to WHO Press, at the above address (fax: +41 22 791 4806; e-mail: permissions@who.int).

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

The mention of specific companies or of certain manufacturers' products does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by the World Health Organization in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. Errors and omissions excepted, the names of proprietary products are distinguished by initial capital letters.

All reasonable precautions have been taken by the World Health Organization to verify the information contained in this publication. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall the World Health Organization be liable for damages arising from its use.

Cover design: J-C. Fattier, WHO.

Printed by Wissenchaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Stuttgart, Germany.

THE WHO RECOMMENDED CLASSIFICATION OF PESTICIDES BY HAZARD AND GUIDELINES TO CLASSIFICATION 2009

The WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard was approved by the 28th World Health Assembly in 1975 and has since gained wide acceptance. When it was published in the WHO Chronicle, 29, 397-401 (1975), an annex, which was not part of the Classification, illustrated its use by listing examples of classification of some pesticidal active ingredients and their formulations. Later suggestions were made by Member States and pesticide registration authorities that further guidance should be given on the classification of individual pesticides. Guidelines were first issued in 1978, and have since been revised and reissued every few years.

Up until the present revision the original guidelines approved by the World Health Assembly in 1975 have been followed without amendment. In December, 2002 the United Nations Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (UNCETDG/GHS) approved a document called "The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals" with the intent to provide a globally-harmonized system¹ (GHS) to address classification of chemicals, labels, and safety data sheets. The GHS (with subsequent revisions) is now being widely used for the classification and labeling of chemicals worldwide. For this revision of the Classification the WHO Hazard Classes have been aligned in an appropriate way with the GHS Acute Toxicity Hazard Categories for acute oral or dermal toxicity as the starting point for allocating pesticides to a WHO Hazard Class (with adjustments for individual pesticides where required). It is anticipated that few of the more toxic pesticides will change WHO Hazard Class as a result of this change. As has always been the case, the classification of some pesticides has been adjusted to take account of severe hazards to health other than acute toxicity (as described in Part II). The GHS Acute Toxicity Hazard Category for each pesticide is now presented alongside the existing information.

The document is arranged as follows:

Part I: Overarching principles for the classification of pesticides as recommended by the World Health Assembly. These principles continue to apply, but the World Health Assembly Resolution envisaged that the classification criteria might need to be developed with time and increasing experience. The guide-points originally proposed in 1975 are now being aligned with the corresponding Acute Toxicity Hazard Categories from the GHS.

Part II: Guidelines to Classification. Individual products are classified in a series of tables, according to the oral or dermal toxicity of the technical product. The tables are subject to review periodically.

The toxicity values are intended to be a guide only. Formulations should be separately classified using the methods set out on pages 4 (single technical product) and 7 (mixtures) and the table in Part I. To assist in the classification of formulations, an annex is provided giving numerical tables from which the classification may also be derived.

¹ See http://www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/ghs_rev03/03files_e.html.

Comments on Part II of the document are welcome, together with proposals for new entries. These should be addressed to the International Programme on Chemical Safety, World Health Organization, 1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland, and should include supporting data on the compound being commented on or proposed.

This document is a revision of the document previously issued as ISBN 92 4 154663 8.

PART I RECOMMENDED CLASSIFICATION OF PESTICIDES BY HAZARD

Extract from WHO Chronicle, 29: 397-401 (1975)

In 1973, the WHO Executive Board asked the Director-General of WHO to take steps to develop a tentative classification of pesticides that would distinguish between the more and the less hazardous forms of each pesticide. A proposal for a WHO recommended classification of pesticides by hazard was accordingly prepared, taking into account the views of members of the WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Insecticides and other expert advisory panels with special competence and interest in pesticide technology, as well as the comments of WHO Member States and of two international agencies. This proposal was adopted by the Twentyeighth World Health Assembly, which recommended the use of the classification by Member States, international agencies, and regional bodies.

The text below is reproduced from the Proposal² which was adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1975.

The hazard referred to in this Recommendation is the acute risk to health (that is, the risk of single or multiple exposures over a relatively short period of time) that might be encountered accidentally by any person handling the product in accordance with the directions for handling by the manufacturer or in accordance with the rules laid down for storage and transportation by competent international bodies.

Any classification based on biological data can never be treated as final. In the assessment of biological data, honest differences of opinion are inevitable and most borderline cases can be reclassified in an adjacent class. Variability or inconsistency in toxicity data due to differences in susceptibility of test animals, or to experimental techniques and materials used can also result in differing assessments. The classification criteria are guide-points intended to supplement but never to substitute for special knowledge, sound clinical judgement or experience with a compound. Reappraisal might be necessary from time to time.

Basis of classification

The classification distinguishes between the more and the less hazardous forms of each pesticide in that it is based on the toxicity of the technical compound and on its formulations. [In particular, allowance is made for the lesser hazards from solids as compared with liquids.]³

The classification is based primarily on the acute oral and dermal toxicity to the rat since these determinations are standard procedures in toxicology. Where the dermal LD_{50}^{4} value of a compound is such that it would place it in a more restrictive class than the oral LD_{50} value would indicate, the compound will always be classified in the more restrictive class. Provision is made for the classification of a particular compound to be adjusted if, for any reason, the acute hazard to man differs from that indicated by LD_{50} assessments alone.

² Official Record of the World Health Organization 1975, No.223, Part 1, p.12

³ Note:- this distinction is not made in the GHS and no longer applies to the WHO Classification

⁴ The LD_{50} value is a statistical estimate of the number of mg of toxicant per kg of bodyweight required to kill 50% of a large population of test animals.

Application of the criteria for classification

- (a) Where it is shown that for a particular compound the rat is not the most suitable test animal (for example, if another species is conspicuously more sensitive or more closely resembles man in its reaction) then the classification of that compound should take this into account.
- (b) In practice, the majority of classifications will be made on the acute oral LD_{50} value. However, dermal toxicity must always be considered since it has been found that, under most conditions of handling pesticides, a high proportion of the total exposure is dermal. Classification based on dermal data in a class indicating a great risk is necessary when the dermal LD_{50} values indicate greater hazard than oral LD_{50} values.
- (c) If the active ingredient produces irreversible damage to vital organs, is highly volatile, is markedly cumulative in its effect, or is found after direct observations to be particularly hazardous or significantly allergenic to man, then adjustments to the classification can be made by classifying the compound in a class indicating a higher hazard. Alternatively, if it can be shown that the preparation is less toxic or hazardous than expected from consideration of the LD₅₀ values of the ingredient or ingredients, or for any other reason, adjustments should be made by classifying the compound in a class indicating a lower hazard.
- (d) In certain special cases the acute oral or dermal LD_{50} values of the compound or formulation should not be used as the main basis for classification. In such cases (for example, aerosol preparations, other special formulations and fumigants), more appropriate criteria should be used.
- (e) It is highly desirable that, whenever practicable, toxicological data for each formulation to be classified should be available from the manufacturer. However, if such data are not obtainable, then the classification may be based on proportionate calculations from the LD_{50} values of the technical ingredient or ingredients, according to the following formula:

*LD*₅₀ active ingredient×100 Percentage of active ingredient in formulation

If the formulation contains more than one ingredient (including solvents, wetting agents, etc.) of significant toxicity-enhancing properties, then the classification should correspond to the toxicity of the mixed ingredients.

(f) With a few exceptions, pesticides have low volatility and therefore no criteria are at present set out for volatility in this Recommendation. The inclusion of such criteria is unlikely to affect the classification of pesticides by hazard except in the case of volatile fumigants used in agriculture and food storage. On the other hand, when the criteria are applied to pesticide formulations based on solvents or to other chemicals, account must be taken of volatility and consequent inhalation toxicity.

Effects of classification on labeling⁵

While no specific symbols to identify classes are included in the Recommendation, the following are the general implications of the classification as regards labelling.

The aim should be uniformity in the statement on the nature of the risk (by phrase and/or symbol) on the label of the product, irrespective of the country of origin or use. Labels of products classified in classes Ia and Ib should bear a symbol indicating a high degree of hazard (usually a type of skull and crossbones) and a signal word or phrase, e.g. POISON or TOXIC. The presentation of the symbol and word or phrase, in terms of colour, size and shape should ensure that they are given sufficient prominence on the label.

The text should be in the local language and for all formulations should include the approved name of the active ingredient or ingredients, the method of use, and precautions to be taken in use. For classes Ia and Ib, symptoms and immediate treatment of poisoning should also be included.

The detailed precautions necessary for the use of a pesticide depend on the nature of the formulation and the pattern of use and are best decided by a pesticide registration authority when accepting a commercial label.

There are international agreements on symbols to denote hazards from materials which are inflammable, corrosive, explosive, etc., and these should be consulted and used where appropriate.

Revised criteria for classification (introduced for 2009 update)

The table showing the Recommended Criteria for Classification from the original World Health Assembly Proposal is not shown because it is no longer used. WHO now uses the Acute Toxicity Hazard Categories from the GHS⁶ as the starting point for classification. This change is consistent with the 1975 World Health Assembly Resolution which envisaged that the WHO Classification would be further developed with time in consultation with countries, international agencies and regional bodies. The GHS meets this requirement as a classification system with global acceptance following extensive international consultation.

WHO Class		LD ₅₀ for the rat (mg/kg body weight)	
		Oral	Dermal
Ia	Extremely hazardous	< 5	< 50
Ih	Highly hazardaus	5 50	50 200



abelladat 301

