



## RESPONSIBLE CHEMICAL USE



Learning how to manage and handle chemicals safely and responsibly not only ensures your personal protection, but also provides environmental protection for our precious natural resources, like water, soils, native plants and animals, marine and coastal environments.



What appears on a chemical product label is determined by legislation and regulation

This fact sheet is part of a series designed to help you:

- increase your awareness of correct and responsible use of all chemical types
- gain the knowledge required to effectively control weeds, pest insects and diseases without damaging, contaminating or polluting our environment
- adopt best practice to minimise chemical use and maximise personal safety, and
- play a part in improving water quality and environmental health.

### Chemical Products

Herbicides are designed to kill weeds.  
Insecticides are designed to kill insects.  
Fungicides are designed to kill fungi.

All of these types of chemical products – even household chemicals – are carefully labelled so users know how toxic the chemicals are to humans and how to achieve the best possible results, with minimum personal and environmental risk, when using them.

The following information is designed to help you better understand the information that appears on chemical product labelling.

### Why Have a Label?

What appears on a chemical product label is determined by legislation and regulation.

This ensures that labelling is consistent while users are informed about toxicity and other safety issues, as well as what the product is used for. It also ensures manufacturers don't make unreasonable claims about their products.

To help simplify the meaning of the Poisons Schedule, all chemical labels must carry a specific heading known as a "Signal Heading".

### Signal Headings

From a personal safety viewpoint, the Signal Heading is one of the most important pieces of information on a chemical label. This is printed at the top front section of the label.

Most herbicides, insecticides or fungicides carry one of these three Signal Headings:-

- CAUTION
- POISON
- DANGEROUS POISON

A product that is Unscheduled according to the Poisons Schedule requires no Signal Heading. However you may find a variety of other phrases in the Signal Heading position on the label, such as:-

- Keep Out of Reach of Children
- Read Safety Directions Before Opening or Using, or
- in some cases, a combination of both.

### Understanding the Signal Heading

Chemicals are categorised according to their toxicity, often referred to as their degree of hazard. These range from slight through to low, moderate and high.

Chemicals in the low to high hazard range are required by law to be registered through the Poisons Schedule.

The Schedule is numbered and runs from Schedule 5 (low hazard) to Schedule 7 (high hazard).

A chemical that only presents a slight hazard is classified as Unscheduled. Most of the common agricultural chemicals you can buy are listed as Unscheduled, Schedule 5, Schedule 6 or Schedule 7 poisons.

*A Schedule 7 chemical is not permitted to be sold, stored or used in domestic/urban situations.*

### Other fact sheets in this series

- Accuracy and Effectiveness
- Alternatives to Chemicals
- Bait Station Safety
- Best Time to Spray
- Calibrating Spray Equipment
- Personal Safety
- Understanding Product Labels #2
- Using Glyphosate
- Weeds Near Water





## Signalling the Risk – It's on the Label

The following table should help clarify and simplify what the Signal Headings mean.



### Poisons Schedule

Unscheduled

### Signal Words

No signal heading required

You may find "Keep Out of Reach of Children", "Read Safety Directions Before Opening or Using", or a combination of both

### Degree of Hazard

Slight



### Poisons Schedule

Schedule 5

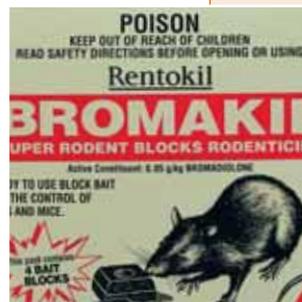
### Signal Words

Caution

Keep out of reach of children  
Read safety directions before opening or using

### Degree of Hazard

Low



### Poisons Schedule

Schedule 6

### Signal Words

Poison

Not to be taken  
Keep out of reach of children  
Read safety directions before opening or using

### Degree of Hazard

Moderate



### Poisons Schedule

Schedule 7

### Signal Words

Dangerous Poison

Not to be taken  
Keep out of reach of children  
Read safety directions before opening or using

### Degree of Hazard

High

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When using chemicals more is not better!

If you are uncertain about any aspect of chemical use, please seek professional advice from the place of purchase or the manufacturer before proceeding.

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