Derbyshire Constabulary

POISONS AND PESTICIDES GUIDANCE

POLICY REFERENCE 06/150

This guidance is suitable for Public Disclosure

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Date Approved: April 2003
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1. Guidance Identification Page

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| **Guidance owner:** | Head of Dept., Operational Support |
| **Last reviewed by:** | Elizabeth Hadfield  |
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**Impacts on other policies / guidance / documents (list):**

None

**Security Classification:**

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

**Disclosable under FOI Act:** YES

**Guidance to be published on Intranet** YES

**Guidance to be published on Force Website** YES
2. **Legislative Compliance**

2.1 This document has been drafted to comply with the principles of the Human Rights Act. Proportionality has been identified as the key to Human Rights compliance, this means striking a fair balance between the rights of the individual and those of the rest of the community. There must be a reasonable relationship between the aim to be achieved and the means used.

2.2 Equality and Diversity issues have also been considered to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and meet our legal obligation in relation to the equality duty. In addition, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Health and Safety Issues have been considered. Adherence to this policy or procedure will therefore ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and internal policies.

2.3 It is important that high quality customer service is provided as part of the Poisons and Pesticides guidance and the standards specified in the Customer Service Policy apply throughout this document.

3. **Introduction**

3.1 The purpose of this guidance is to provide advice to Police Officers who may be called upon to attend incidents involving potentially dangerous pesticides or poisonous chemicals.

**Role of the Police**

Our first duty is to protect life, to ensure public safety and to ensure the safety of Police personnel engaged on any such incident. Any failure to deal effectively with poisoning incidents carries the potential for risk to members of the public in particular children whose natural curiosity must be considered.

The role of the Police will be:

- i) to provide a first response to reported incidents;
- ii) to as far as is possible or practicable, make the scene of any such incident safe or to contain the area;
- iii) to secure specialist assistance from DEFRA / Natural England through the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme method of reporting;
- iv) to provide support and assistance to our partners where and as appropriate in the gathering / retrieval of evidence; and
- v) to manage the investigation of offences within our jurisdiction as an enforcement body.

3.2 Few incidents relating to pesticides are brought to the attention of the police and of those that do, not all threaten human life. However it is only a matter of time before a Police Officer attends an incident where such a threat is posed.
3.3 The illegal abuse and misuse of pesticides is a widespread problem and is not, as often believed, confined to rural areas of the country. For instance, many gardeners use metaldehyde based slug pellets to safeguard flower beds and vegetable plots and over-use frequently leads to the death of companion animals such as cats and dogs. As the population of urban foxes increases so too will the temptation to destroy them by unlawful and indiscriminate methods. Peregrine falcons are being encouraged to occupy high-rise buildings in the centre of towns and cities and this will inevitably lead to conflict with pigeon fanciers. It is therefore important to see this as a Force wide problem and not one restricted to the rural Divisions. More sinister abuse of pesticides and poisons is a less widespread and underground activity, often relating to the unlawful persecution of birds of prey. Where circumstances / incidents of this nature arise or are suspected, full details should be brought to the attention of the Force Wildlife Crime Liaison Officer and the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

4. The Threat.

4.1 Some of the main pesticides used to persecute animals are carbofuran, aldicarb, alphachloralose, mevinphos, strychnine phosphine and cyanide. Cyanide and phosphine are fumigants and are sometimes used illegally for the destruction of badgers within their setts. Many of these chemicals are life-threatening; some will kill on contact with the skin. Phosphine and cyanide generating fumigants are both solids which turn gaseous when exposed to moisture in the air and can be fatal if inhaled.

4.2 As an indication of how serious poisoning incidents can be:

- In one case a small bottle of strychnine was lost by a gamekeeper at Hebden Bridge whilst illegally destroying foxes. It took 3 days of moorland search before the bottle was found by a member of the public and handed in to the police. Yorkshire Water were considering closing down the water supply system to Calderdale as a result of this single incident.
- In another incident in Yorkshire an injured fox was collected by staff from an animal hospital and examination showed that it was slowly being dissolved by a caustic substance. Some of this substance dropped onto the arm of the person attempting to clean it and he was badly burned. In this particular incident the informant was aware of the existence of the animal hospital. Under normal circumstances the Police would have been the first point of contact and would have been the first to attend and this could have resulted in a Police Officer being seriously injured.
- In another case, in Worcestershire, following the discovery of a poisoned red kite, enough of the poison, Endrin was found, to kill 26,000 dogs of Labrador size, or, 2.7 million birds of red kite size, or 11,000 people.

5. Legislation and Regulation.

5.1 The main piece of legislation governing the use of pesticides is The Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 (FEPA) under which the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 (COPR) are made. Other legislation includes The Plant Protection Products Regulations 1991 (PPPR). The approval and registration of pesticides is the responsibility of the Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) of the Health and Safety Executive based in York (This was the Pesticides Safety Directorate until 1 April 2009). Once pesticides have been approved and are placed on the market and in use, they are monitored by the Wildlife Management and Licensing team within Natural England who
investigate incidents of pesticide poisoning under the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS).

5.2 Prior to any pesticide being removed from the approved list the information is widely circulated so that alternative pesticides can be bought to replace those going ‘off-shelf’. Unfortunately the pesticides that are being removed are sometimes very effective when used as poisons and agencies acknowledge that stockpiles can be built up by unscrupulous farmers and gamekeepers. So much so that they are still found in quantity years after production has ceased.


6.1 Natural England Wildlife Advisers are authorised as ‘Enforcement Officers’ under the Food and Environment Protection Act, which provides them with certain powers to enter onto land, to search for evidence and to take samples. However the powers do not extend to entry into dwelling houses which would require a search warrant. They can take other people to assist them e.g. Police, RSPCA or RSPB. They are PACE aware but are not trained investigators or interviewers. In those cases where there is sufficient evidence of abuse or misuse of pesticides from the initial field enquiry to consider enforcement action, the case is referred to HSE Field Operations Division, who will complete inquiries and prepare a case file. The legal branch of HSE then decides, in consultation with CRD whether to bring a prosecution by application of the Code for Crown Prosecutors considering the likelihood of conviction and public interest criteria.

6.2. Natural England authorised officers are based regionally throughout England. It should be borne in mind that these Investigators work 9 to 5, Monday to Friday. When samples are collected by Natural England staff they are first taken for post mortem at a Veterinary Laboratories Agency site in the region. Analysis of tissue samples takes place at Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) in York (This was the Central Science Laboratory until 1 April 2009). There can be a considerable delay from the collection of a sample to the results of analysis being available as samples are routinely run through the equipment in batches. In compelling cases priority analysis can be requested but this is for HSE to decide due to the resource implications. Employees in land management sector and members of the public have been the subject of a publicity campaign for a number of years sponsored by the HSE and other partners. This campaign is aimed at educating those that abuse pesticides to persecute wildlife to change their illegal practices. The public are encouraged to report incidents on a freephone number 0800 321600.

6.3 Natural England’s assistance might include:

- Assisting with searches conducted under a warrant issued to the Police;
- Handling of suspect materials;
- Arranging post-mortem examinations;
- Technical advice including attendance at interviews;
- Advice on legal status of the pesticides involved;
- Advice on pesticide legislation.

6.4 In most instances wildlife offences under other legislation (most commonly the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) will also be identified. In such cases any investigation will often be led by the police with Natural England providing assistance.
6.5 It is important at the outset of an inquiry to decide which agency is going to lead the case. If Natural England leads then the investigation is likely to be conducted as an inquiry primarily into pesticide offences.

7 Initial Actions and Advice

7.1 Staff who receive information relating to incidents of pesticide abuse should:

- Be aware of the circumstances where poison baits or gas may be used.
- Record all incidents relating to poisons/pesticides on NSPIS utilising the “ss” wildlife code.
- Record sufficient information for officers to take action including:
  - Location - may be in the middle of a wood or field so comprehensive details are needed together with a full grid reference if possible.
  - Informant - can we remain in contact with the informant - we may need guiding to the scene.
  - Any dead/dying animals or birds nearby.
  - Any indication as to who may be responsible.
  - Details of landowners or occupiers.
  - The nature of the substance - above ground it could look like flour, grain, or it could be eggs or an animal carcass - how is it laid out, is it coloured or contain granules or a powder.
  - If rabbit, fox or badger holes are blocked then poison gas may be present. Powder or tablets give off poison gas when activated by moisture. The holes must not be unblocked and powder or tablets must not be touched.
- Arrange police attendance.
- Consider SOCO / Wildlife Crime Officer.
- Notify Natural England on 0800 321600 (Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme).

7.2 Those reporting poison/pesticide incidents should be advised:

- Not to touch anything - some poisons can penetrate the skin.
- Move upwind of the substance.
- Do not unblock holes – there is a danger of poison gas.
- Do not investigate holes where poison may be suspected.
- Do not collect powder, tablets, granules etc.
- Do not allow people, livestock or pets to go near.
- Preserve if possible by covering with foliage, sacking, a box etc.

7.3 Procedures

Incidents relating to poisons will normally relate to one of three scenarios:

- Victims of illegal poisoning.
- Poison baits, for example rabbit or game bird carcasses onto which poisons have been spread or broken eggs into which poisons have been introduced.
- Storage/possession of illegal poisons in a shed or store.

The policing response will be dependent on the scenario being reported.
7.4 Victims of poison

Wildlife that dies as a consequence of taking poison poses the least degree of threat to police officers. Whilst some poisons prove to be fatal to wildlife within minutes others can take some hours or days to take effect. As a consequence it is not always the case that bait will be found in the vicinity of poisoned wildlife. Where the carcass of an animal is found and there is suspicion that it may have died as a consequence of illegal poisoning a decision as to whether the police should recover the carcass can be made either by the force wildlife crime officer or a trained divisional wildlife crime officer. Normally such carcasses will be collected by Natural England advisors.

If collected by the police, carcasses should not be frozen as to do so may compromise later post mortem examination. Ideally they should be stored in a fridge or other cool place until collected by Natural England. Baits can be frozen. Under no circumstances should a fridge or freezer used for storing wildlife victims or baits be used for storing foodstuffs for human consumption.

Details of the Force and Divisional Wildlife Crime Officers can be located via the Force Intranet. Go to Alphabet Express / W / Wildlife and Countryside / Contacts.

7.5 Poison baits.

Poison baits pose perhaps the greatest hazard to investigating officers and members of the public. Such items will normally take the form of edible matter to be taken by predators or carrion eaters. In most circumstances where the level of risk to members of the public is considered to be low (perhaps because of a very isolated location) the bait should be left in situ pending the arrival of Natural England advisors.

In such circumstances the bait should ideally be covered with a view to preventing disturbance by humans or wildlife. On receipt of a call relating to the finding of poisoned bait Natural England would treat the matter as a priority and attend on the same or next working day.

In other circumstances where it is considered that the risk to members of the public is such that the bait must be removed immediately no action to do so should take place without consultation with the Force Wildlife Crime Officer or a trained Divisional Wildlife Crime Officer who will provide advice following consultation with Natural England or other sources.

Details of the Force and Divisional Wildlife Crime Officers can be located via the force intranet. Go to Alphabet Express/W/Wildlife and Countryside/Contacts

7.6 Storage/possession of illegal poisons.

Where the police receive incidents involving allegations of illegal possession or storage of poisons they will be passed to the Wildlife Advisers of Natural England and to a Divisional Wildlife Crime Officer. Such matters although involving criminal behaviour would not involve an imminent public safety risk and may be dealt with by way of a delayed response unless particular circumstances dictate otherwise. It is likely that the offender in such circumstances will be required by Natural England to store or dispose of poisons in a safe manner using an Enforcement Notice.
Under normal circumstances Police Officers must not remove substances from premises where they are being kept. To do so dramatically increases the risks to the seizing officers and members of the public. Where circumstances dictate that substances must be removed perhaps from an insecure and unoccupied building the advice of the force wildlife crime officer must be sought.

Details of the Force and Divisional Wildlife Crime Officers can be located via the force intranet. Go to Alphabet Express/W/Wildlife and Countryside/Contacts.

7.7 Collection of samples

Little specialist equipment is needed to collect poison baits or poison victims. Nitrile gloves and clear plastic evidence bags will normally suffice whereas paper sacks and white disposable latex gloves provide inadequate protection.

A number of measures that apply to all tasks are:

- Staff must always maintain a high standard of hygiene and must not smoke, eat or drink whilst handling samples and must wash their hands thoroughly after handling all samples prior to undertaking any other activity. All cuts and abrasions to be cleaned and dressed;
- Disposable equipment provided for use must not be re-used, and carrying boxes and cool boxes must not be used for other purposes including personal use;
- Re-usable equipment must be cleaned thoroughly after use;
- If a sample can not be handled safely it must not be taken into possession;
- Staff should consider the environment in which samples are to be handled and the type of material that is involved. Where appropriate avoid handling samples in confined areas and keep exposure time to all hazards to a minimum;
- Tetanus vaccinations should be kept up to date and a Medical and Emergencies Contact Card should be carried.

8 Task analysis

8.1 A simple task analysis of hazards in Wildlife Incidents has resulted in the production of a number of guidance notes by Natural England for their staff which will be of value to officers attending incidents involving pesticides:

- Preparation for the task.
- Arrival at the site.
- Handling animal casualties.
- Handling suspected poison baits.
- Suspected gassing of badger setts/fox earths.
- Transport of samples from the site.
- Short term storage of samples.

8.2 The structure of each of the guidance notes gives information about:

1. A description of the task to be performed.
2. The Hazards
   - the hazards and the type of presentation encountered,
   - the route by which the hazard may cause harm, and
3 The Risks
   • details of the exposures and an assessment of the risk associated with that hazard,
4 The Controls
   • The measures that have been agreed to control the risk.

9. Monitoring and Review

The application of this guidance will be monitored by Operational Support to ensure that it remains accurate, relevant and up to date. It will be reviewed by Operational Support every 3 years.
Appendices

WIIS 1

PREPARATION FOR THE TASK

Task
To be well prepared to meet and deal with the likely hazards encountered during a Wildlife Incident enquiry.

Details
A key part of the enquiries we make into the death or injury of wildlife, where pesticides are thought to be involved, is the preservation of samples that are brought to our attention at the outset, or samples discovered during the course of enquiries.

Hazards
The hazards are largely unknown before departure from the office. The caller may describe wildlife casualties or dead pets, suspect poison baits or a gassed badger sett or suspicious white powder at a bee hive etc. The main hazard groups are zoonoses and pesticides.

Exposure
Although several hundred pesticide incidents are dealt with nationally each year by Natural England, individual police officers will seldom be called upon to investigate such matters.

Risks
Risks are minimised by taking time to obtain as much accurate information from the caller so the right equipment is to hand on site. The risk of pesticide contamination is low when the correct procedures are followed including the correct use of PPE and sample handling and strict adherence to personal hygiene and first aid.

Controls including PPE
Control of WIIS hazards relies first on only trained staff with an aptitude for the job undertaking investigations. Within Derbyshire Constabulary a number of divisional wildlife crime officers have received training in relation to poisoning incidents.
ARRIVAL AT THE SCENE

Task
Assessment of the hazardous environment before any risk of exposure is likely.

Details
Before handling samples advisers will usually make a detailed search of the area immediately around a suspicious occurrence. Advisers will survey the scene looking for indications that a pesticide may be involved. In addition to animal casualties note will be taken of suspicious materials including suspect baits, powders, granules, pellets, rodent baits, warning signs and pesticide containers that may be present.

Hazards
The hazards posed include pesticides that may be present or zoonoses associated with animal carcases. Zoonoses are diseases transmissible from animals to man.

The hazard from fumigants is potentially fatal and certain pesticides particularly organophosphorous insecticides can be skin absorbed and exposure can lead to illness or death.

Exposure
Prior to physical contact with the samples there are not usually any significant risks of exposure. The exception is the illegal gassing of badger setts/fox earths where a fumigant may be present in the air around the incident site. However, this is usually at a concentration that poses a low risk.

Risks
The risk is very low from exposure to pesticides when the procedures are followed including the proper use of PPE, following correct handling procedures, strict adherence to personal hygiene and first aid.

Controls including PPE
Wear appropriate PPE to the situation. Regularly consult available information/instructions and follow guidance and other procedural notes.
HANDLING ANIMAL CASUALTIES

Task
To examine, collect and package animal casualties thought to have been exposed to pesticides.

Details
Animal casualties are the most commonly encountered samples in Wildlife Incidents. The range of species can be diverse and include both mammals and birds which may be wild animals, feral animals or domestic pets. Those most frequently encountered are cats, dogs, foxes, magpies, pigeons and raptors. However, some of the more unusual samples can include: pet pigs, exotic raptors or honey bees. A visual examination is made of animal carcasses taking care to use adequate protection during handling.

Hazards
The hazard most frequently associated with animal casualties are the zoonoses which may be carried by any animal carcasses. Zoonoses are diseases transmissible from animals to man. The route by which the zoonoses may enter the human body includes ingestion due to poor personal hygiene or by inhalation of spores from an aerosol effect on disturbing a carcass. Abrasions or punctures could occur from handling carcasses with sharp beaks, claws or talons, and previously broken unprotected skin can be a route of infection. The presence of a pesticide to which an animal may have been exposed will be internal and so not likely to cause a significant hazard. Ingestion is only likely from poor personal hygiene.

Exposure
Samples are often collected in field situations, but may also be collected from individual members of the public or premises such as veterinary surgeries. Some samples may be autolytic and fly blown. Animal casualties are handled in about 75% of cases.

Risks
Very low risk of contracting disease. This is reduced by strict adherence to control measures such as hygiene, appropriate sample handling, correct use of PPE and first aid. Bearing in mind the potential risks of TB, particular care will be needed should it prove necessary to handle badger carcases.

Controls including PPE
The main control for animal carcasses handled in a naturally ventilated field situation, is to use disposable nitrile gloves at all times when handling such samples. Samples must be contained by double bagging in body bags before transport from the site. The protective gloves should be discarded into the outer of the two bags for disposal.

When placing carcasses in a bag, a useful but not essential additional precaution is to use a filtering facepiece which may reduce the risk of inhalation of zoonoses. This RPE should comply with type P2 or P3 specifications.

Staff should roll back the sides of the bag so the specimen can be placed on the bottom of the bag. The bag should then be extended over the sample excluding excess air as the bag is unrolled. The end of the bag should always be away from the face to avoid inhalation of the excluded air and staff must remain “up-wind”. Staff must not drop carcasses into bags from height.

Bags must be labelled to aid future identification.
HANDLING SUSPECTED POISON BAITS

Task
To examine and collect samples that are suspected of being poison baits.

Details
Suspected poison baits can take a variety of forms from a spillage of blue coloured grain or pellets which may be thought to be a rodenticide or molluscicide, through to an egg, or eviscerated animal carcass which has clearly been interfered with, and may have some discoloration that suggests an insecticide may be involved. Typical groups of compounds include organophosphorous, carbamates and organochlorine compounds.

Hazards
In dealing with suspected poison baits the nature of the poison is not known and precautions must be taken on the basis of a "worst case scenario". The most hazardous material is likely to involve a solvent based organophosphorous compound. The route of entry into the body may be by direct ingestion, by inhalation where there is a vapour phase of the pesticide, and possibly by skin absorption. Less hazardous materials include rodenticides and molluscicides. The poison bait could involve an eviscerated animal carcass with various zoonoses. Ingestion is only likely due to poor personal hygiene.

Exposure
Baits are usually handled in naturally ventilated field situations and are encountered in less than 10% of cases. Exposure is potentially high due to direct contact with an unknown concentrate chemical/pesticide which was set in position with the intention of killing an animal. Time of exposure is short (< 5 minutes).

Risks
The risk is low of pesticide poisoning when the procedures are followed including the correct use of PPE, appropriate sample handling, strict adherence to personal hygiene and first aid.

Controls including PPE
To control the hazard in field situation advisers must use disposable nitrile gloves at all times when handling a possible poison bait. The sample should be double bagged and if fluids are involved should have absorbent material packed round to absorb any spillage or leakage. Pesticides based on a solvent will usually betray themselves by the odour and these must be placed in a sealed container. Advisers should remain upwind in such situations and avoid inhalation of vapour.
WIIS 6

SUSPECTED GASSING OF BADGER SETTS/FOX EARTHS

Task
To investigate the possible illegal gassing of a badger sett or fox earth.

Details
The illegal gassing of setts and earths often involves a larger quantity of the fumigant material than is used for legitimate rabbit gassing. The range of compounds likely to be used is more restrictive than with poison baits. The sett/earth is usually blocked with soil so the suspect material is not visible. A probe is entered into the blocked sett to allow the atmosphere to be tested for the presence of either cyanide or phosphine. This is carried out by using standard gas detection equipment.

Hazards
Aluminium phosphide and sodium cyanide are the two compounds advisers are likely to encounter. On reaction with moisture phosphine and cyanide are evolved as a gas. Exposure to the gas can be fatal. Lower level exposure can result in nausea, headaches and breathing difficulties.

Exposure
Advisers will typically only deal with one or two cases per year. The only likely route of exposure is by inhalation of the gas. Some, but not all, individuals can smell the compounds at very low concentrations. Such exposure must be avoided. Using the full hood respirator and appropriate canister allows the gas sampling to be carried out safely. No material is removed from the site for further inspection or analysis. Contaminated equipment is buried on site.

Risks
The risk is low of inhaling the fumigant when the procedures are followed including the correct use of PPE and RPE, following testing protocols, strict adherence to personal hygiene and first aid.

Controls including PPE
A detailed system of work has been written and made available to all staff. This involves staff working in pairs, use of a disposable overall, wellingtons, nitrile gloves and a full hood respirator fitted with an appropriate canister. Equipment specifications and suppliers are listed in the specialist guidance note for this area of work.

Emergency Procedures
Following discussions with the HSE and in response to the guidance they provided, first aid and emergency procedures have been revised. The main change involves adopting the use of oxygen therapy combined with basic resuscitation and life saving skills. These measures have replaced the use of antidotes previously carried to deal with cases of cyanide poisoning.
**WIIS 7**

**TRANSPORT OF SAMPLES FROM SITE**

**Task**
To convey samples including casualties, baits and pesticides from the site.

**Details**
Animal casualties are usually taken to a Veterinary Investigation Centre. The sample at this stage is double bagged but there may be some risk of body fluids emanating from the sample. Suspect poison baits discovered in the field and samples from pesticide stores are also carried from sites for eventual transport to WIU.

**Hazards**
The main hazard from biological samples arises from zoonoses via aerosol inhalation of dusts or particles. Pesticide samples may involve several litres of concentrate organophosphorous or similarly toxic compounds. Inappropriate containers may have been used to store this material and the packaging may be in poor condition. Ingestion is only likely due to poor personal hygiene. Others potentially at risk from the hazards include other road users and the emergency services in the event of an accident and unsuspecting colleagues who may handle or come into contact with samples.

**Exposure**
Risks are higher as vehicles are confined spaces and staff may need to travel for 2 hours (100 miles) to transport the sample. Serious vehicle accidents do and have occurred. Such accidents can result in spillage, leakage and contamination of the interior of the vehicle.

**Risks**
The risk is very low of contacting pesticide when the procedures are followed including the correct use of PPE, adequate handling, packaging and transport, strict adherence to personal hygiene and first aid.

**Controls including PPE**
The risk is controlled by ensuring that animal casualties are placed in a sturdy plastic/polypropylene box in the vehicles. Absorbent material should be placed in the base of such a box in case there is any egress of fluid. Suspect poison baits and chemical samples gathered from pesticide stores should be placed in a sealed box to contain the material along with ample absorbent material to prevent contamination of the vehicle. If it is anticipated that a pesticide store will be searched then a purpose built chemical box should be taken, along with absorbent material. Special care must be taken with any rusting containers holding liquids. Boxes used for sample transfer must not be used for other purposes.

Hazard warning signs must be applied to containers to warn others.

Disposal of contaminated absorbent material and PPE should be via an authorised disposal agent.
WIIS 8

SHORT TERM STORAGE OF SAMPLES

Task
Storage of samples prior to forwarding to analytical laboratories.

Details
Samples of animal casualties, suspect poison baits or chemicals may need to be stored as a result of the office being closed or the Veterinary Laboratories Agency site not being open on return from an incident. Some advisers will be returning to their homes.

Hazards
The main hazards arise from an aerosol effect of zoonoses which may occur as a result of degradation of a biological sample, spillage of a liquid, powder or other compound, or the release of volatile chemical compounds into the air so creating a hazard. Ingestion is only likely due to poor personal hygiene or inadequate security allowing a child or other unauthorised person access to the material.

Exposure
Any other people who may have access to the Advisers vehicle at home or the storage facility that is used in the office are potentially at risk.

Risks
The risk is very low of contacting pesticide when the procedures are followed for the correct use of PPE, storage and handling, and strict adherence to personal hygiene and first aid.

Controls including PPE
It is preferable for all samples to be retained securely at an office or secure store, but this is not always possible. In some cases a locked garden shed with restricted access may offer a short term solution when advisers have to take a sample home. In some instances the most secure place may be the locked boot of a car. Storage areas must be ventilated before use by staff or others.

All samples must be retained in an office in a secure store. In the office care must be taken not to put other people at risk, and if the storeroom is shared the freezer or fridge must be locked (e.g. computer security ties). Access to the store must be considered including risks to cleaners or maintenance staff.

All temporary storage must be secure and have restricted access both for reasons of safety and continuity of evidence.

Such freezers or fridges must not be used for other purposes such as storage of food for human consumption. Freezers and fridges must be labelled to say that food must not be stored in them and must also display a “biohazard” sign.

The store must not be in the same room as any office workstation, but it may be acceptable in a “laboratory” type area. Containers used to store suspect pesticide samples must carry hazard warning signs.
A copy of the strategy and guidelines is held in Force and Divisional Operations Rooms, Operations Room staff are aware of the procedures to be followed.

Failure to comply with this guidance may lead to YOUR death or serious injury.

Contact your Divisional Wildlife Liaison Officer at earliest opportunity for advice on the investigation of incidents involving pesticides.