

Product Safety Notes

The two training documents for a beginning apprentice comprise of 522 pages. Texas laws and regulations are another 90 pages. There are over 10,000 pesticide products with numerous pages per label. Given the volume of information, it is a challenge to respond in one sentence when asked questions related to “organic products” and “product safety”. Here is a thumb nail sketch that we hope is useful to our customers:

Are your products safe?

- 1) All pesticides, rodenticides, and termiticides in our inventory are registered through a difficult and expensive process through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- 2) Pesticide labels have one of three signal words: “Caution” “Warning” or “Danger”. Each represents a relative level of toxicity. Most of our products read “Caution” or “Warning”.
- 3) The relative toxicity measurements in our industry are interpreted as such: The lower a number, the higher the toxicity. Below are toxicity ratings of some typical household items:

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|-------|----------|-------|--------|-------|----------------|-------|
| Nicotine | 3 | Caffeine | 127 | Bleach | 192 | Aspirin | 200 |
| Table Salt | 3,000 | Vinegar | 3,300 | Windex | 5,000 | Dawn Dish Soap | 6,300 |

Oral toxicity of *most* pesticides used by Burnett's Pest: 5,000 – 15,000

Do you have organic or non-toxic products?

Short answer: Yes – we have some. In fact, we have products labeled for termites, drain flies, moths, and ants that have no signal word at all. That means these are essentially non-toxic to humans. But pesticides are only one tool. Traps and insect monitors are amongst other devices we use. We also utilize mechanical remedies such as wire mesh, caulk, steel wool, and numerous other tools that support a good integrated pest management program.

BEWARE OF THE TERMS “NATURAL” AND “ORGANIC” as these do not always mean non-toxic. As illustrated by the numbers above, natural and organic products have toxicity levels too. Unfortunately, some companies misuse terms like “no-chem”, “green”, and “environmentally safe”.

What is the bottom-line?

Schools, hospitals, daycares, restaurants, grocery stores, parks, recreational fields, are just a few examples of places that are treated frequently by pest control providers. These are places where our kids play – places we walk into every day. All in all, pesticides should be used by knowledgeable and licensed individuals. Products should also be used sparingly and at the proper dosage.