



Fire Suppressant Safety Information

Below are suggestions and precautions for all categories of wildland fire chemicals and long-term fire retardants.

People

- Fire retardant contains ammonia and will sting if it gets into cuts or scratches or comes into contact with chapped or sunburned skin.
- Wash thoroughly with a gentle soap and water to remove all residues, as many of the fire chemicals could dry your skin.
- After washing, use a good-quality hand cream to minimize drying and chapping.

Structures (wood / metal)

- The red color of fire retardants comes from iron oxide (rust), which can be difficult to remove.
- Wash fire retardant off as soon as possible. Some of these products may discolor metal.
- Dampening a stained surface with water, and then scrubbing it with a wet, stiff-bristled brush dipped in borax has been effective.
- Power washers may drive the red colorant into the surface of the wood and should generally be avoided.
- Restrict water use to prevent puddles that may be attractive to pets.
- Avoid leaving standing puddles of water by using absorbent materials, such as sand, soil, or other materials.

Vegetation

- Rinse fire retardant off vegetation.
- Avoid leaving standing puddles of water by applying absorbent materials, such as sand, soil, or other materials.
- Leaf burn may occur since fire retardants contain fertilizer and at levels higher than what is often sold at garden stores. This could cause vegetation and plants to appear dead after contact; however, they will generally recover and grow back, usually within one to two months.
- As with any garden product, wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before eating. If you cannot wash the product thoroughly, don't eat it.

Pets & Other Animals who are exposed to fire chemicals

- Shampoo your pet thoroughly, since many of the fire retardants are very drying to skin.
- Use materials that will effectively absorb any puddles after shampooing, or in areas where animals may have access. Materials, such as sand, soil, or other absorbents, should be used on any standing water or puddles.
- Avoid ingestion of water containing fire retardant or other chemicals – keep animals away from puddles.
- If your pet appears ill after drinking from puddles or standing water, make sure your veterinarian knows that the animal may have ingested a fertilizer-based product.

Thanks to Boulder County Public Health for sharing the content of this fact sheet.

9/13/10