



StateCover WHS Fact Sheet

Use of 'Roundup' Pesticide

Issue

The World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) recently announced that formulations containing glyphosate, including 'Roundup' and other similar products, were assessed as '*probably carcinogenic to humans*'.

This contrasts with information included in existing Safety Data Sheets which indicate the relative safety of the chemical.

Australian regulators including Safe Work Australia and WorkCover NSW have not provided advice or direction relating to the use of glyphosate at this time. However, given this new information, it is recommended that Councils take a cautious approach and investigate their use of glyphosate and other hazardous chemicals used for weed control.

Recommended Action:

Council has a legal obligation to manage the risk of any hazardous chemicals used. StateCover recommends that Councils take this opportunity to review their use and management of these chemicals as follows:

1. Conduct a risk assessment of current weed control chemicals to identify your risk level and the individuals at greatest risk of exposure. This should consider:
 - The chemicals used
 - The concentrations used
 - The type and frequency of exposure (eg. pre-mixing requirements, frequency of applications)
2. Consider a range of control measures that reduce risk and ensure best practices when handling chemicals including:
 - Investigate whether glyphosate can be substituted with safer chemicals
 - Increasing the use of alternative methods of weed control including mechanical slashing, hand weeding, steam, etc.
 - Investigating order quantities and packaging to reduce direct handling and mixing of the product
 - Developing hygiene procedures for handling the chemical
 - Reviewing storage and transport practices
 - Developing safe work procedures that include:
 - Instruction on correct application to minimise direct exposure

- Situations where the application of Roundup is not permitted (e.g. during high winds)
 - Requiring use of pre-mixed solutions to reduce exposure where possible
 - Where mixing is required, instructions on mixing including ratios and precautions to take during decanting and mixing
 - Hygiene practices during and after working with or around glyphosate
 - Spill containment and clean-up
3. Consider the introduction of health monitoring where a risk assessment indicates that workers are at a higher level of risk due to the nature of their exposure to glyphosate.

Further Information:

- International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) report on the carcinogenicity of five organophosphate pesticides:
<http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarcnews/pdf/MonographVolume112.pdf>
- Safe Work Australia - Hazardous Chemicals Requiring Health Monitoring:
<http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/hazardous-chemicals-requiring-health-monitoring>
- Safe Work Australia - Health Monitoring for Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals:
<http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/health-monitoring-guide-pcbu>