



New
Jersey
Department of
Environmental
Protection

COMPLIANCE ADVISORY

Enforcement **Alert**

Making You Aware of Anticipated Enforcement Activities

Compliance and Enforcement

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Mothball Pest Control: The Label is the Law

Who can benefit from this advisory?

Anyone using mothballs can benefit from this advisory, especially homeowners following “Do-It-Yourself Pest Control” who wrongfully use mothballs to:

- rid gardens of animals eating vegetables or flower bulbs
- repel animals, insects and reptiles from structures
- repel unwanted pets from going on their lawn

All the above are illegal and dangerous uses of mothballs.

Why is the DEP issuing this advisory?

Mothballs are regulated pesticides. Some magazine and websites recommend using mothballs as rodent, insect or general pest repellents. These are remedies of folklore and myth. Some people think that mothballs are natural animal repellents because they are ordinary household products. Mothballs are labeled for control of clothes moths, their eggs and larvae. They also are used sometimes for carpet beetles, their eggs and larvae.

Mothballs are marble-sized balls of chemical pesticide and come in several forms: flakes, crystals and cakes. The active ingredients in mothballs are Naphthalene, Paradichlorobenzene or Camphor. These active ingredients are insecticides, a type of pesticide fumigant that vaporizes at room temperature; therefore, they are a poison. The labels generally instruct that mothballs be placed in an airtight container with the clothing that needs protection. It is *illegal* to use mothballs for any other purpose or to use any method of applying them not specified on the product label.

What is the DEP doing?

Given recent incidents, the Bureau of Pesticide Compliance and Enforcement is taking a proactive approach to educating the public about the proper uses of mothballs. Legally registered mothball product labels do not permit the use of mothballs as animal repellents.

What should I do?

Always follow manufacturer’s directions on the product label and handle with care, as mothballs are a pesticide and are poisonous. Keep mothballs out of the reach of children and pets.

Never use mothballs in or around water sources; these sources can become

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contaminated. Never use mothballs in soil, as their active ingredients can be absorbed by plants and retained in plant tissues when dissolved in the soil. They also have the potential to contaminate groundwater.

Avoid exposure to large quantities of Naphthalene, Paradichlorobenzene or Camphor, as these chemicals can lead to headaches, nausea, dizziness, vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, eye and nose irritation and coughing; or worse. Mothballs are also dangerous because they can be mistaken for candy or food and may be eaten by children or pets. Never use mothballs in open containers or in a way that will allow the pesticide fumes to accumulate in living spaces where people and pets are exposed. After removing clothing treated with mothballs from storage, be sure to aerate or thoroughly wash the clothing before use.

If you have a nuisance animal problem in or around your home, contact a properly licensed pest management professional who is experienced in nuisance wildlife control or insect extermination. Do not risk the health of your family and others, pets, wildlife or the environment by trying to drive out animals, insects or reptiles with mothballs.

Whom should I contact with questions?

For more information, please contact the DEP Bureau of Pesticide Compliance and Enforcement at (609) 984-6568 and ask to speak to a Bureau Supervisor.

You can also call the National Pesticide Information Center at 1 (800) 858-7378 (seven days per week, 6:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. PST) or email at npic@ace.orst.edu.

Where can I get more information?

The following websites can be accessed for additional information:

[US EPA - Pesticides - Reregistration Eligibility Decision \(RED\) for P-dichlorobenzene](#)

[US EPA - Pesticides - Reregistration Eligibility Decision \(RED\) for Naphthalene](#)

https://www3.epa.gov/pesticides/chem_search/ppls

[Avoid Illegal Household Pesticide Products](#)

Please note this advisory is intended to be a summary explanation of a department initiative. It does not include all potentially applicable requirements. If you have any questions related to compliance with this initiative, please contact the Enforcement number listed above.