

## Updates from IDPH PPSP – July 11, 2014

Recently a Georgia woman died after a family member distributed an agriculture pesticide in her home earlier in the day to kill roaches and other insects. According to media reports, the insecticide released phosphine gas that was inhaled by the victim and a grandchild living with her. The grandchild was hospitalized but survived. Two other grandchildren were treated and released. Because of the risk of exposure to first responders, EMS personnel and Emergency Room staff, a Hazardous Materials Response Team was activated to decontaminate everyone that was exposed to the deceased female and the juveniles. The hospital emergency room was closed as soon as the chemical exposure was discovered and reopened later that night.

The pesticide was identified as Fumitoxin or aluminum phosphide (AIP). AIP is a cheap, effective and commonly used pesticide in agriculture that can be deadly to people and pets when not used properly. Everyone who handles pesticides needs to read, understand, and follow the labeling provided on the products to avoid accidental exposures.

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Pesticide Poisoning Surveillance Program recently published a report of occupational pesticide poisonings in Iowa from 2008 to 2012. Over the past 5 years, Iowa had 331 reports that met the Sentinel Event Notification System for Occupational Risk (SENSOR) case definition for pesticide poisoning. This averages to approximately 66 cases per year.

Applying, mixing, transporting and disposing of pesticides were the most common activities during the exposure. Sixty percent of exposures had a contributing factor of not wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment. Almost half (47%) of the cases went to emergency departments for evaluation and another 39% only used Poison Control Center advice as medical treatment. The entire report is available at [www.idph.state.ia.us/LPP/Pesticide.aspx](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/LPP/Pesticide.aspx).

At the 2014 Farm Progress Show Health and Safety Tent, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Pesticide Bureau will be providing information on the EPA Worker Protection Standard (WPS) and recently proposed changes to this regulation. Free computer flash drives containing WPS information and resources for WPS training will be available. The WPS can affect farm operators and employers. The Pesticide Bureau can help you understand and comply with the WPS, resulting in a safe working environment for agricultural pesticide applicators and farm workers. You can find additional information and updates regarding this year's Health and Safety Tent partners at the IDPH Occupational Health & Safety Surveillance Program website [www.idph.state.ia.us/LPP/OHSSP.aspx](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/LPP/OHSSP.aspx) or contact Kathy at 800-972-2026 or [IDPH.OHSS@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:IDPH.OHSS@idph.iowa.gov).