

## **International Programme on Chemical Safety**

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The International Programme on Chemical Safety addresses the risks of chemicals in the environment and workplace. It has pointed out that fatalities have resulted from inappropriate behaviour when paraquat was used, such as using a leaking sprayer which may lead to severe skin lesions and absorption, and that damage to skin or eyes and nosebleeds through the irritant action of paraquat illustrate the need for strict personal hygiene and rigorous adherence to safe handling procedures (IPCS 1991). Regarding paraquat the following recommendations were made:

«Where practical and reasonable, the availability and use of the 20% liquid product should be limited to bona fide agriculturalists, horticulturalists, and professional users, who work with trained personel, properly maintained equipment, and adequate su-pervision»  
(IPCS 1991, section 3.2).

Recommendations made on personal protection during the use of paraquat are:

«Avoid all contact with skin, eyes, nose, and mouth, when handling concentrated paraquat. Wear PVC-, neoprene- or butyl-rubber gloves (preferably gauntlet form), neoprene apron, rubber boots and face-shield. Wear a face-shield when handling and applying the diluted formulation. (...) Paraquat should not be sprayed with inadequate dilution, e.g., by hand-held, ultra-low-volume application. It should not be used by people suffering from dermatitis or by people with wounds, notably on the hands, until these have healed»  
(IPCS 1991, section 4.1).

Section 6 specified that clothing should be impervious and it was recommended that safety information should be easily available to users or health workers (IPCS 1991).

[International Programme on Chemical Safety \(IPCS\)](#), Paraquat, Health and Safety Guide no. 51, Geneva 1991