



National Pesticide Information Center

1.800.858.7378

npic@ace.orst.edu

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Mothballs - Regulation, Proper Uses and Alternatives



Related Topics:

- [Health Effects of Mothballs](#)
- [Chemical Properties and Environmental Fate of Mothballs](#)
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- [Paradichlorobenzene Information](#)
- [Controlling Snakes In and Around the House](#)
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Regulation of Mothballs

Mothballs are pesticides intended to kill clothes moths and other fabric pests. They are regulated in the United States by the [Environmental Protection Agency](#). The **label** of any pesticide, including mothballs, specifies exactly where and how you can legally use the product. Using mothballs in a way not specified by the label is not only illegal, but can harm people, [pets](#) or the environment.

Some mothballs for sale may be **illegal**, which means they were imported without oversight of the product contents or labeling. Because they have not been evaluated, the risks they pose are unknown.

Proper Use of Mothballs

Mothball labels typically direct users to place mothballs in a tightly closed container that will prevent the pesticide fumes from accumulating in living spaces where people and pets can breathe them in for long periods of time. Inside airtight containers, the vapors released by the mothballs build up and kill the clothes moths.

One common mistake is using mothballs in containers that aren't airtight, allowing the toxic vapors to escape into the surrounding air. This can lead to long-term exposure, which may cause [health problems](#).

Another common mistake is using mothballs in gardens or other outdoor locations to control insects, [snakes](#) or other wildlife. Using mothballs outside can harm children, [pets](#) and other animals. Mothballs used outdoors can also contaminate soil, plants and water. The information below contains additional resources for the proper use of mothballs and some alternative methods of controlling clothes moths.

To learn more about mothballs, choose from these topics:

- [Health Effects of Mothballs](#)
- [Chemical Properties and Environmental Fate of Mothballs](#)

If you have questions about this, or any pesticide-related topic, please call NPIC at **1-800-858-7378** (8:00am - 12:00pm PST), or email at npic@ace.orst.edu.

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Additional Resources:**Regulation of Naphthalene**

- **Reregistration Eligibility Decision for Naphthalene** - U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- **Contaminant Candidate List Regulatory Determination Support Document for Naphthalene** - U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- **Naphthalene, IDLH Documentation** - Center for Disease Control, NIOSH
- **ATSDR Regulations and Advisory** - Center for Disease Control, NIOSH
- **Proposition 65: Naphthalene Hazard Assessment** - California Environmental Protection Agency
- **No Significant Risk Level (NSRL) For The Proposition 65 Carcinogen Naphthalene** - California Environmental Protection Agency

Mothballs Are Not Snake Repellents!**Regulation of Paradichlorobenzene**

- **Reregistration Eligibility Decision for Paradichlorobenzene** - U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- **IRIS Toxicological Review and Summary Documents for 1,4-Dichlorobenzene** - U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- **Basic Information about p-Dichlorobenzene in Drinking Water** - U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- **p-Dichlorobenzene, IDLH Documentation** - Center for Disease Control, NIOSH
- **ATSDR Regulations and Advisory** - Center for Disease Control, NIOSH

Proper Use and Alternatives

- **Mothballs: Proper Use and Alternative Controls for Clothes Moths** - OSU Extension
- **Clothes Moths** - University of Kentucky Extension Service
- **Preventing Damage from Clothes Moths and Carpet Beetles** - New Mexico State University Extension Service
- **Clothes moths** - Utah State University Extension Service
- **Managing Clothes Moths** - Los Angeles Public Health Department

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We are open from 8:00am to 12:00pm Pacific time Mon. — Fri.
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