



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ANTIMICROBIAL BIOCIDES

My restoration company routinely uses antimicrobial disinfectants and biocides during remediation of water damaged and mold impacted materials. How can I best protect my workers and my customers during antimicrobial use?

Answer: Be knowledgeable, trained, and understand that antimicrobial biocides are regulated as pesticides by the federal government and at least 38 states. The EPA regulates pesticides under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Note that the term pesticide also refers to herbicides, fungicides and other substances used to control pests. FIFRA only registers (**does not approve**) pesticides for specific use(s). Once registered, a pesticide may not be legally used, unless the use is consistent with the manufacturer directions for use on the pesticide's label.

Check with the Agricultural Department of your state for your state requirements. Companies applying biocides may be required to be licensed and personnel applying pesticides may also require licensing and need to receive specific training.

Ten Key Antimicrobial Biocide Safeguards:

1. **Read** and follow the label instructions. It is a violation of federal law to use an antimicrobial in a manner inconsistent with its label.
2. **Advise** customers of their right-to-know about any product being applied in their home or work environment. The IICRC Standard S500 recommends its members to get a **written consent form signed** by its customers before applying a biocide in a structure.
3. **Have** your IAQ professional evaluate/select the least toxic antimicrobial to meet your project needs. Products that are also less odorous, corrosive and will not discolor surfaces are best. It is also the law for your company to maintain Safety Data Sheets (SDS) on all products used and train company personnel in their use, handling, storage, disposal and health effects and control measures. SDS's also provide information regarding chemicals stability, reactivity and incompatibility with other materials.
4. **Maintain** written up-to-date corporate health and safety policies, protocols and work practices for antimicrobial use.
5. **Use** the minimum effective quantity of antimicrobial as possible during application. Do not spray or fog biocides unless it is within a negative pressure containment. Do not apply biocides inside HVAC ductwork unless the product is specifically registered for this use.
6. **Apply** biocides to clean surfaces; allow label specific contact time for them to work efficiently.
7. **Rinse/wipe** off biocides after their application. Residual levels of biocides on surfaces can be problematic and are not well understood or tested. Even dead mold spores can cause health concerns.
8. **Use** biocides to clean hard, non-porous surfaces such as metal, plastic, glass, Formica or painted surfaces. Do not apply to porous surfaces without verifying its use according to its EPA registration.
9. **Choose** your words wisely when preparing your job proposals. Antimicrobials should be used to clean, not sterilize (requires 100% kill rate), disinfect (requires 99% kill rate), or sanitize.
10. **Have** your qualified IAQ professional select proper personal protective equipment for every biocide you use. Protection includes protective clothing, gloves, eye protection and respiratory protection. OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.134 requires employers to develop/maintain a written respiratory protection program for workers assigned to wear respiratory protection. Good personal hygiene practices are also essential.

When you need professional help or advice, email Alan Sutherland, CIH, CHMM at a.sutherland@aetinc.biz or call 610-891-0114. We provide nationwide services; phone consultations are free. Check out the full range of environmental contracting/consulting services we provide at our website www.aetinc.biz.

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