
Metsulfuron-methyl

HERBICIDE FACT SHEET

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION

This fact sheet is one of a series issued by the Bonneville Power Administration for their workers and the general public. It provides information on forest and land management uses, environmental and human health effects, and safety precautions. A list of definitions is included in Section VIII of this fact sheet.

I. BASIC INFORMATION

COMMON NAME: metsulfuron-methyl

CHEMICAL NAME: methyl 2-[[[(4-methoxy-6-methyl-1,3,5-triazin-2-yl)amino]-
carbonyl]amino]sulfonyl]benzoate

Cas No. 74223-64-6

CHEMICAL TYPE: sulfonylurea herbicide

PESTICIDE CLASSIFICATION: systemic, selective pre- and post-emergent herbicide

REGISTERED USE STATUS: "General Use."

FORMULATIONS: Commercial herbicide products generally contain one or more ingredients. An inert ingredient is anything added to the product other than an active ingredient. Because of concern for human health and the environment, EPA announced its policy on toxic inert ingredients in the Federal Register on April 22, 1987 (52FR13305). This policy focuses on the regulation of inert ingredients. EPA's strategy for implementing this policy included the development of four lists of inerts, based on toxicological concerns. Inerts of toxicological concern were placed on List 1. Potentially toxic inerts/high priority for testing were placed on List 2. Inerts of unknown toxicity were placed on List 3, and inerts of minimal concern were placed on List 4.

The inert ingredients of the Escort® formulation are not classified by the USEPA as inert ingredients of toxicological concerns to humans or the environment.

The contents of the metsulfuron-methyl formulation are listed below:

Escort®

Metsulfuron-methyl	60 %
Inert	40 %

RESIDUE ANALYTICAL METHODS: EPA Method 632.

II. HERBICIDE USES

REGISTERED FORESTRY, RANGELAND AND RIGHT-OF-WAY USES: Metsulfuron-methyl as Escort[®] is registered for use in non-agricultural areas as a general weed and brush control herbicide. For terrestrial use only, however, Escort[®] is registered for use in floodplains where surface water is not present and in terrestrial areas of deltas and low-lying areas.

OPERATIONAL DETAILS:

TARGET PLANTS: Metsulfuron-methyl is a selective herbicide primarily for post-emergent control of annual, biennial, and perennial broadleaf weeds and brush. Escort[®] does have pre-emergent activity.

MODE OF ACTION: Metsulfuron-methyl enters the plant through the root zone and foliage, inhibiting the synthesis of key amino acids.

METHOD OF APPLICATION AND RATES: Broadcast and spot spray applications at 1/4 to 4 ounces of formulated product per acre. Ground and aerial application. Do not apply more than 4 ounces/acre/year.

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS:

TIMING OF APPLICATION: Timing is dependent on the target plant; however, application may be made at any time the ground is not frozen. As metsulfuron-methyl must move to the root zone to be effective for pre-emergent control, adequate soil moisture is necessary.

DRIFT CONTROL: Care should be exercised not to overspray or apply the herbicide to adjacent non-target areas. Drift control is achieved by observing weather conditions and following label and sprayer instructions. Spray droplet size should be 150 microns or larger.

RESTRICTIONS/WARNINGS/LIMITATIONS: Do not enter or allow others to enter the treated area until sprays have dried. Do not apply through any type of irrigation system. Do not apply directly to water or areas where surface water is present, or to intertidal areas below the mean high water mark. Do not apply to irrigation banks or other ditch banks. Do not use on lawns. Do not use on walks, driveways, tennis courts, or other impermeable areas. Do not apply to frozen ground. Treated soil should remain undisturbed. Grazing and cut forage restrictions of 3 days post-application at rates of 1-2/3 to 3-1/3 ounces per acre. This herbicide is injurious to plants at extremely low concentrations. Non-target plants may be adversely affected from drift and run-off. Not for use in California.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS/FATE

SOIL:

RESIDUAL SOIL ACTIVITY: The half-life of metsulfuron-methyl is 120 days.

ADSORPTION: The K(oc) of metsulfuron-methyl is 35.

PERSISTENCE AND AGENTS OF DEGRADATION: Metsulfuron-methyl is persistent with no major (>10%) degradates.

METABOLITES/DEGRADATION PRODUCTS AND POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS: Metsulfuron-methyl degrades to nonphytotoxic, low-molecular-weight compounds.

WATER:

SOLUBILITY: 2790 mg/l in water (pH 7).

POTENTIAL FOR LEACHING INTO SURFACE AND GROUND WATER: Metsulfuron-methyl is moderately persistent and highly mobile and has potential to enter surface waters from runoff. The very low application rate and microbial breakdown suggest that metsulfuron-methyl has little potential to enter or ground water.

AIR:

VOLATILIZATION: Nonvolatile

POTENTIAL FOR BYPRODUCTS FROM BURNING OF TREATED VEGETATION: Not known.

IV. ECOLOGICAL TOXICITY EFFECTS ON NON-TARGET SPECIES

MICROORGANISMS:

ACUTE CONTACT TOXICITY: LD₅₀ (honey bee contact) >25 µg/bee

OVERALL TOXICITY: Practically Non-Toxic

PLANTS: Contact will injure or kill target and non-target plants.

AQUATIC VERTEBRATES:

ACUTE TOXICITY: LC₅₀ (rainbow trout 96-hour) >150 mg/l

ACUTE TOXICITY: LC₅₀ (bluegill sunfish 96-hour) >150 mg/l

OVERALL TOXICITY: Practically Non-Toxic

AQUATIC FRESHWATER INVERTEBRATES:

ACUTE TOXICITY: LC₅₀ (*Daphnia magna* 48-hour) >150 mg/l

OVERALL TOXICITY: Practically Non-Toxic

AQUATIC ESTUARINE/MARINE INVERTEBRATES:

ACUTE TOXICITY: EC₅₀ (Eastern oyster larvae 48-hour)

ACUTE TOXICITY: LC₅₀ (sheepshead minnow 96-hour)

OVERALL TOXICITY: Practically Non-Toxic

TERRESTRIAL ANIMALS:

AVIAN ACUTE ORAL TOXICITY: LD₅₀ (bobwhite quail)

AVIAN ACUTE ORAL TOXICITY: LD₅₀ (mallard duck) >2510 mg/kg

AVIAN SUBACUTE DIETARY TOXICITY: LC₅₀ (bobwhite quail) >5620 mg/kg

AVIAN SUBACUTE DIETARY TOXICITY: LC₅₀ (mallard duck) >5620 mg/kg

MAMMAL ACUTE ORAL TOXICITY: LD₅₀ (rat) >5000 mg/kg

OVERALL TOXICITY: Practically Non-Toxic

BIOACCUMULATION POTENTIAL: No Potential

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES: Federally listed plants may be adversely affected if the product is applied directly to the plants.

V. TOXICOLOGICAL DATA

ACUTE TOXICITY:

ACUTE ORAL TOXICITY: LD₅₀ (rat) >5000 mg/kg

ACUTE DERMAL TOXICITY: LD₅₀ (rabbit) >5000 mg/kg

PRIMARY SKIN IRRITATION: Rabbit - Mild Irritant

PRIMARY EYE IRRITATION: Rabbit – Moderate Irritant

ACUTE INHALATION: LC₅₀ (rat) >5.3 mg/l

OVERALL TOXICITY: Category III – Caution

CHRONIC TOXICITY:

CARCINOGENICITY: No effects reported.

DEVELOPMENTAL/REPRODUCTIVE: No effects reported.

MUTAGENICITY: Not a mutagenic.

HAZARD: The end-use product label for Escort[®] carries the *Caution* signal word due to eye irritation.

VI. HUMAN HEALTH EFFECTS

ACUTE TOXICITY (POISONING):

REPORTED EFFECTS: None.

CHRONIC TOXICITY:

REPORTED EFFECTS: None reported.

POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS FROM CONTACTING OR CONSUMING TREATED VEGETATION, WATER OR ANIMALS: None reported.

POTENTIAL FOR ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS FROM INERT INGREDIENTS CONTAINED IN THE FORMULATED PRODUCTS: None reported..

HEALTH EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO FORMULATED PRODUCTS: Mild, temporary skin and eye irritation.

HEALTH EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH CONTAMINANTS: None reported.

HEALTH EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH OTHER FORMULATIONS: None reported.

VII. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

SIGNAL WORD AND DEFINITION:

METSULFURON-METHYL - **CAUTION** – CAUSES EYE IRRITATION

PROTECTIVE PRECAUTIONS FOR WORKERS: Applicators and other handlers must wear long-sleeved shirt and long pants, and shoes plus socks.

MEDICAL TREATMENT PROCEDURES (ANTIDOTES):

EYES: Flush eyes with water; call physician if irritation persists.

SKIN: Wash all exposed areas with soap and water; call physician if irritation persists.

INGESTION: No specific intervention is indicated as compound is not likely to be hazardous by ingestion. Consult a physician if necessary.

INHALATION: Remove to fresh air.

HANDLING, STORAGE AND DISPOSAL: Store at room temperature or cooler. Do not reuse container. Rinse container and dispose accordingly.

EMERGENCY SPILL PROCEDURES AND HAZARDS: Contain and sweep up material of small spills and dispose as waste. Do not contaminate water, food, or feed by storage or disposal.

VIII. DEFINITIONS

adsorption – the process of attaching to a surface

avian – of, or related to, birds

CAEPA – California Environmental Protection Agency

carcinogenicity – ability to cause cancer

CHEMTREC – Chemical Transportation Emergency Center

dermal – of, or related to, the skin

EC₅₀ - median effective concentration during a bioassay

ecotoxicological – related to the effects of environmental toxicants on populations of organisms originating, being produced, growing or living naturally in a particular region or environment

FIFRA – Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act

formulation – the form in which the pesticide is supplied by the manufacturer for use
half-life – the time required for half the amount of a substance to be reduced by natural processes
herbicide – a substance used to destroy plants or to slow down their growth
Hg – chemical symbol for mercury
IARC – International Agency for Research on Cancer
K(oc) – the tendency of a chemical to be adsorbed by soil, expressed as: $K(oc) = \text{conc. adsorbed}/\text{conc. dissolved}/\% \text{ organic carbon in soil}$
LC₅₀ – the concentration in air, water, or food that will kill approximately 50% of the subjects
LD₅₀ – the dose that will kill approximately 50% of the subjects
leach – to dissolve out by the action of water
mg/kg – weight ratio expressed as milligrams per kilogram
mg/l – weight-to-liquid ratio expressed as milligrams per liter
microorganisms – living things too small to be seen without a microscope
mPa – milli-Pascal (unit of pressure)
mutagenicity – ability to cause genetic changes
NFPA – National Fire Protection Association
NIOSH - National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
NOEL - no observable effect level
non-target – animals or plants other than the ones that the pesticide is intended to kill or control
OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Pa – Pascal (unit of pressure)
persistence – tendency of a pesticide to remain to remain in the environment after it is applied
pesticides – substances including herbicides, insecticides, rodenticides, fumigants, repellents, growth regulators, etc., regulated under FIFRA
PPE – personal protective equipment
ppm – weight ratio expressed as parts per million
residual activity – the remaining amount of activity as a pesticide
T&E – Threatened and Endangered Species (from the Endangered Species Act)
µg – micrograms
volatility – the tendency to become a vapor at standard temperatures and pressures

IX. INFORMATION SOURCES

Du Pont Agricultural Products, Escort[®], Oust[®], Telar[®] Herbicides, Product Information Bulletin, H-66607, June 1996

Du Pont Agricultural Products, Noxious/Selective Weed Control, Escort[®] and Telar[®] Herbicides, Product Information Bulletin, H-87254, January 2000

Du Pont Agricultural Products, Escort[®] DF Herbicide, Specimen Product Label, H-63665, February 2, 1999

Du Pont Agricultural Products, Escort[®] DF Herbicide, Material Safety Data Sheet M0000027, December 19, 1997

EPRI, Determination of the Effectiveness of Herbicide Buffer Zones in Protecting Water Quality, EPRI Final Report TR-113160, 1999

Extension Toxicology Network, Pesticide Information Profile, Metsulfuron-Methyl, Revised October 1996
<http://ace.orst.edu/info/extoxnet/pips/ghindex.html>

Extension Toxicology Network, Toxicology Information Briefs: Bioaccumulation, Revised 1993,
<http://ace.orst.edu/info/extoxnet/tibs/bioaccum.htm>

Spray Drift Task Force, A Summary of Ground Application Studies, 1997
<http://www.agdrift.com/publications/Body.htm>

USDA Forest Service, Pesticide Fact Sheet, Metsulfuron methyl, November 1995
<http://www.infoventures.com/e-hlth/pesticide/pest-fac.html>

X. TOXICITY CATEGORY TABLES

TABLE I: HUMAN HAZARDS

Category	Signal Word	Route of Administration			Hazard	
		Acute Oral LD ₅₀ (mg/kg)	Acute Dermal LD ₅₀ (mg/kg)	Acute Inhalation LC ₅₀ (mg/l)	Eye irritation	Skin irritation
I (Highly Toxic)	DANGER (poison)	0-50	0-200	0-0.2	corrosive: corneal opacity not reversible within 7 days	corrosive
II (Moderately Toxic)	WARNING	>50-500	>200-2000	>0.2-2	corneal opacity reversible within 7 days; irritation persisting for 7 days	severe irritation at 72 hours
III (Slightly Toxic)	CAUTION	>500-5000	>2000-20.000	>2-20	no corneal opacity; irritation reversible within 7 days	moderate irritation at 72 hours
IV (Practically Non-toxic)	NONE	>5000	>20,000	>20	no irritation	moderate irritation at 72 hours

After *Pesticide User's Guide*, Ohio State University, Extension Bull. No. 745, 1998.

TABLE II: ECOTOXICOLOGICAL RISKS TO WILDLIFE (TERRESTRIAL AND AQUATIC)

Risk Category	Mammals	Avian	Avian	Fish or Aquatic Invertebrates
	Acute Oral LD ₅₀ (mg/kg)	Acute Oral LD ₅₀ (mg/kg)	Acute Dietary LC ₅₀ (mg/kg)	Acute Concentration LC ₅₀ (mg/l)
Very Highly Toxic	<10	<10	<50	<0.1
Highly Toxic	10-50	10-50	50-500	0.1 – 1
Moderately Toxic	51-500	51-500	501-1,000	>1 – 10
Slightly Toxic	501-2,000	501-2,000	1,001-5,000	>10 – 100
Practically Non-toxic	>2,000	>2,000	>5,000	>100

Table II created from information contained in *Pesticides and Wildlife*, Whitford, Fred, et al., Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service PPP-30, 1998.

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This fact sheet was prepared by USDOE-Bonneville Power Administration, March 2000.