

Guidance for Pesticide Canisters Found on the Beach



SPILL PREVENTION AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM

ADEC notification numbers

Southeast Region (south of
Yakutat) 907-465-5340

Central Region (Yakutat to
Norton Sound) 907-269-3063

Northern Region (north of
Norton Sound) 907-451-2121

Outside normal business hours
1-907-428-7200

**United States Coast Guard
National Response Center**
Statewide 1-800-424-8802

For Additional Information:

[www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/
MarineDebris/index.htm](http://www.dec.state.ak.us/spar/perp/MarineDebris/index.htm)

Aluminum canisters about 10 inches tall are frequently found on beaches and shorelines. These are discarded from cargo ships, where they are used to distribute aluminum phosphide, a pesticide also known as zinc phosphide, phostoxin, or rat poison. This is a hazardous, restricted-use product (RUP) which can only be used by persons who are certified pesticide applicators. When phosphide tablets or pellets are exposed to moisture in the air, they generate phosphide gas, which is a human health risk and is flammable.



Uncapped empty canisters are not hazardous waste, and may be disposed of like any household product. The aluminum can be recycled, but the canisters should not be reused for any purpose.

Capped canisters (usually with colored plastic lids, as above) may still contain some pesticide. If a capped canister that contains phosphide is opened, it can present an inhalation hazard and an explosion hazard if it is near an ignition source. If you find a capped canister, wear gloves and handle it carefully. Don't remove the cap. If you can do so safely, without trespassing, move the canister away from the waterline to prevent it from washing back out to sea. Report canisters not retrieved to ADEC. Please see notification numbers on left side of this publication.

Marine debris removal work crews should consult their supervisors if



canisters are found during marine debris removal operations. When handled properly by HAZMAT-trained personnel, chemical residue can be deactivated and converted into a more benign chemical compound similar to baking soda. HAZMAT-trained personnel should refer to the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) on Aluminum Phosphide for information on safe handling, deactivation, and disposal.