

TAM-AAMM

Texas A&M—AgriLife Agronomic Monday Memo (July 7, 2025)

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It Happened to Me—An Agricultural Pesticide Accident

I've written about emergency chemical poisoning, little did I know I would call 1-800-222-1222.

In December 2024 I wrote about emergency help for chemical accidents on the farm, at home, at work. The national toll free number **1-800-222-1222** accesses immediate assistance and advice for any type of poisoning. This is known here in Texas as “poison control” and the Texas Poison Center Network. On June 19th I needed that access. I made the call.



Fig. 1. The safety glasses I was wearing when I got sprayed in the face with herbicide. These might have helped, but for the accident, only goggles would provide the best protection. (But I often won't wear goggles because they fog up.) I wear these routinely at work as sunglasses. (\$1.99/pair from Harbor Freight. Calvin Trostle.)

What Happened

I was mixing Treflan herbicide (active ingredient **trifluralin**) in my backpack sprayer tanks. I think my mistake was I pressured up the tank from my CO₂ bottle to seal the lid. Then I inserted the connection to the hand-held sprayer boom, but I had not released the tank pressure...

PFFFT!!!

Instantly I was sprayed in the face and left eye as the tank pressure was released up through the connector. I was hit hard up under my safety glasses. "Oh my god..." Fortunately, this happened at the wash rack where I get my water for spraying. Within 15 seconds I had a garden hose flushing my eye. It hurt like hell. Racing through my mind is 'visions' (no pun intended) about a damaged eye and loss of sight. I flushed for about six minutes, then I made the call. The poison help line I wrote about I had stored the number in my cell phone. I voice called with iPhone's Siri. I told the staffer what happened, the product, and the active ingredient. In less than 20 seconds I was receiving instructions.



"Flush with water vigorously for 15-20 minutes total. Then go inside and close both eyes for 30 minutes." I did so. Eye still hurts like hell, like I have a dozen eyelashes loose on my eyeball. I peeked a couple of times and I didn't think my vision was impaired. But I'm still scared.

I completed the 30 minutes. I called Poison Control again. "Now what? Do I still need to go to the emergency room?" She didn't say it was essential. I pulled up the Treflan Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) from <http://www.cdms.net> which said Treflan was an irritant to the eye. (That'd be "better" than something like an insecticide.)

I did go to ER. The doctor examined my eye, flushed it more, then treated me for abrasions on my eye. My vision did not appear to be affected.

The "What Ifs..."

- What if I had been off station when this happened? Would I have had flush water? Usually, I would have a water tank. Would I have had enough for prolonged flushing?
- What if I had been on station out in the field, where most of the time I probably don't have extra water? I often just take only my spray cans to the field when on station.
- What if this had been a poison like numerous insecticides? *"Serious eye damage/eye irritation."*

What I Didn't Do...

There were other AgriLife employees on the A&M Station at Lubbock whose cell phone number I had. I was working alone. I should have called someone. I needed someone there to help.

Take Home Lessons

First, I am grateful this was not much worse. My eye is OK. This reinforces the importance of chemical safety at work, on the farm or ranch, in the yard, and in the home. Flush water is important. And I reiterate as well **“AgriLife workers and all our clientele, save this number, (800) 222-1222, in your personal phone.”** Share it widely.

I am not ashamed or embarrassed I had to make this call. I never thought it would be me.

Relevant previous TAM—AAMM: “Emergency Contact for Pesticide Poisonings—Texas Poison Center Network,” *Share this emergency contact with clientele. Put it in your smartphone (Dec. 12, 2024).*

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This weekly agronomic Memo for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension county agents is compiled by Dr. Calvin Trostle, Professor & Extension Agronomist, Lubbock, (806) 777-0247 (mobile), ctrostle@ag.tamu.edu TAM-AAMM tips will be collected at [\(to be determined\)](http://(to be determined)) Permission is granted to AgriLife Extension personnel to use this information as you see fit for Extension education purposes (newsletters, web posting, social media, etc.).

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