

Safety Measures on Rodent-Control Products Protect Pets

New Environmental Protection Agency restrictions aim to limit rodenticide exposure to pets and children.

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In an effort to reduce the risk of accidental poisonings in pets, wildlife and children, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued new safety measures for rodent-control products. EPA is requiring that 10 rodenticides used in bait products marketed to consumers be enclosed in bait stations.

They are brodifacoum, bromadiolone, bromethalin, chlorophacinone, cholecalciferol, difenacoum, difethialone, diphacinone, warfarin and zinc phosphide. The agency also is prohibiting the sale of loose bait, such as pellets, for use in homes.

“The new restrictions will better protect our children, pets and wildlife from thousands of accidental exposures that occur every year,” said Jim Gulliford, EPA assistant administrator. “These practical and low-cost measures provide protection while ensuring rodent control products will continue to be effective and affordable for all consumers.”

Rodenticides are effective for controlling mice, rats, and other rodents that pose threats to public health, critical habitats, native plants and animals, crops, and food supplies. These products, however, also present risks for pet owners, including accidental contact between cats and dogs with such products.

EPA’s action limits rodenticide exposures to children and animals, yet allows pet owners access to a variety of effective rodent control products.

EPA will require sales and distribution and packaging restrictions for products containing four (brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone and difenacoum) of the rodenticides that pose the greatest risk to wildlife to prevent purchase on the consumer market. Rodenticides pose significant risks to wildlife including birds, such as hawks and owls, and mammals, such as raccoons, squirrels, skunks, deer, coyotes, foxes, mountain lions, and bobcats.

It can be a threat through primary exposure (direct consumption of rodenticide bait) and secondary exposure (predators or scavengers consuming prey with rodenticides present in body tissues). There have been several reported incidents involving federally listed threatened and endangered species, such as the Northern spotted owl and the Bald Eagle, which is protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Act.

EPA is requiring that companies manufacturing these products respond to EPA within 90 days regarding their intention to comply with the new requirements.

For details, visit <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/reregistration/rodenticides/finalriskdecision.htm>