



# Ag Container Recycling Council

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## ACRC Surveys States Regarding Open Burning of Pesticide Containers

For 23 years the Ag Container Recycling Council (ACRC) has provided a user friendly and free opportunity for pesticide users to recycle triple or pressure rinsed pesticide containers up to and including 55 gallon drums. This service is now available in forty-four states. Unfortunately, many pesticide users still opt to “dispose” of their containers in less environmentally acceptable manners; e.g. by landfilling or burning. While it is widely acknowledged by state regulators and other interested stakeholders in the supply chain that open burning is still practiced, there is little to no knowledge concerning how prevalent this practice is. As a first step in obtaining some idea of the extent of open burning the ACRC conducted a nationwide survey of state pesticide regulatory agencies in all 50 states. The primary objective of the survey was to identify those states where open burning of pesticide containers is not prohibited. Secondly an effort was made to assess the extent of open burning in those states where it is prohibited by state statute. By comparing this with known current recycling levels in each state the ACRC could then make a judgement regarding the impact of open burning on recycling, e.g. does the existence/ lack of open burning bans have a negative impact on individual state recycling levels?

The survey was sent to the pesticide regulatory agency in 50 states. Responses were received from forty-seven. The results were as follows:

- Open burning of pesticide containers is illegal or prohibited in 32 states
- Open burning is not prohibited in 15 states
- When asked to “estimate” use of various disposal “options” the ranges and averages were\*:

	<u>Range</u>	<u>Average</u>
% merely abandoned on or off user’s site	0 – 30	5
% open burned	0 – 30	10
% taken to waste transfer stations or landfills	0 – 80	50
% recycled	0 – 90	33**
% other	0 – 15	<u>2</u>
TOTAL		100

\* Of those who provided estimates

\*\*Interestingly, the ACRC estimates that the nationwide recycling rate is ~ 32%

Conclusions

- Many state regulators responsible for pesticide disposal do not know whether open burning is prohibited or not in their state.
- Many state regulators responsible for pesticide disposal are not familiar with the ACRC or pesticide container recycling opportunities.
- Based on feedback received, open burning may not be as widespread as generally perceived.
- Respondents reported no cases of enforcement of bans on open burning of pesticide containers.
- There appears to be little correlation between the level of recycling and open burning prohibition in a given state; i.e. states that ban burning do not necessarily have higher recycling rates.

Given that these results are based on information/opinions obtained from only one state official in each state, they may not truly represent the extent/impact of open burning. We would be happy to hear your opinion on this matter. Feedback can be sent to: [rperkins@acrecycle.org](mailto:rperkins@acrecycle.org)