

ANIMAL PEST CONTROL

POSSUM CONTROL

Cyanide Paste for Possum Control

Introduction

Sodium cyanide paste is a deadly poison widely used throughout New Zealand for possum control. Only holders of cyanide licences can buy, store, handle and use cyanide paste. Training in its safe use is essential. Wherever cyanide is used the project is publicly advertised and warning signs posted.

How effective is it?

After eating the paste the possum becomes unconscious within a minute and dies within 3 to 4 minutes. The paste can be mixed with a combination of lures.

How safe is it?

Cyanide is fatal to most animals. Immediate first aid to humans may prevent death. Amyl Nitrate is an antidote that may help recovery from mild poisoning.

Cyanide breaks down rapidly in carcasses so there is little risk to scavengers, however dogs have been known to die after licking the paste from the mouth of a dead possum.



A tube of cyanide paste. Inset: Pea sized cyanide paste on a tree trunk (Photo's Auckland Regional Council).

The paste deteriorates and detoxifies in humid or wet conditions. However as long as bait is recognisable as bait it should be considered dangerous. Cyanide does not contaminate water.

Safety tips

- Keep well away from areas with cyanide baits.
- Make sure children recognise the Cyanide Warning Signs and know not to enter areas. Education material for schools is available from Hawke's Bay Regional Council.
- Keep pets away from cyanide baited areas.
- Contact Hawke's Bay Regional Council for advice on the disposal of unwanted paste and empty paste tubes.
- Seek immediate medical assistance if you suspect cyanide poisoning.

Acknowledgements

Information supplied by Auckland Regional Council.

For further information

For further information on animal pests or the Regional Plant Pest and Animal Pest Management Strategy, please contact the Biosecurity Animal Pest Officers at the Hawke's Bay Regional Council for advice.

Wairoa	06 838 8527
Napier	06 835 9200
Waipukurau	06 858 8636
TOLL FREE	0800 108 838
www.hbrc.govt.nz	

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