

Regulations for handling and using fertilizers

A number of regulations impact on the transport, storage, handling and application of fertilizer. People involved in the industry need to be aware of these and to practise a duty of care to other people and the environment.

Laws, acts and regulations

The import, manufacture, distribution, sale, application and use of fertilizer products are governed by a number of government regulations, with some specifically for fertilizers, and others more general.

Regulations specific to fertilizers

Commonwealth

The Commonwealth regulates fertilizer imports to ensure that hazardous wastes or by-products that contain unacceptable levels of impurities are not used as fertilizers. Surveillance and inspection are carried out on a targeted basis. Those products most likely to contain impurities are most likely to be inspected.

States/Territories

The states and territories regulate the sale of imported and domestically produced fertilizers by setting product standards and specifying label requirements.

While there are differences between the states in fertilizer legislation, the basic requirements are similar.

If a fertilizer product is not properly labelled, i.e. it does not comply with the State Fertilizer Act, it is illegal to sell the product.

Regulations not specific to fertilizers/soil amendments

Other Commonwealth, state and local government regulations may impact on fertilizer sale and distribution, including the following:

- Dangerous Goods
- Environment Protection
- Environmental Planning and Assessment
- Transport
- Building and Construction
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Codes of Practice
- Australian Standards

The regulatory framework for fertilizers is quite different to that for agricultural and veterinary chemicals, although in some areas such as Dangerous Goods, there are some common elements.

Codes of Practice

Codes of Practice are developed by organisations or industries to provide standards of performance considered appropriate for that industry or sector.

Agricultural industry codes

Farmcare – Code of Practice for Sustainable Fruit and Vegetable Production in Queensland

Code of Practice for Sustainable Cane Growing in Queensland and New South Wales