



WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) governing the protection of employees on farms, forests, nurseries, and greenhouses, from occupational exposure to agricultural pesticides. The WPS covers:

- **Agricultural workers** -- performing tasks related to the cultivation and harvesting of plants on farms or in greenhouses, nurseries, or forests, and
- **Pesticide handlers** -- assigned to mix, load or apply agricultural pesticides; clean or repair equipment; act as flaggers, etc.

Employers are responsible for making sure that workers and handlers receive the protections required by the pesticide labeling and the WPS. There are two types of employers:

- **Agricultural worker employers** -- employ or contract for the services of workers or own/operate an establishment that employs workers, and
- **Handler employers** -- hire pesticide handlers or are self-employed as handlers. This definition includes commercial applicators and companies which supply crop advisory services on agricultural establishments.

This brochure explains many of your requirements as an employer under the WPS. **However, whether or not you employ workers and handlers, at a minimum, you will be required to comply with personal protective equipment and restricted-entry statements on the pesticide labels.**

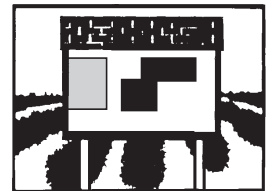
DUTIES OF ALL EMPLOYEES

Some WPS protections that employers must provide are nearly the same whether the employees are workers or handlers.

Information at a Central Location

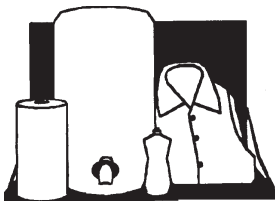
For the benefit of all employees, information must be posted at an easily seen, central location on each agricultural establishment. That information includes:

- Facts about each pesticide application -- the product name, EPA registration number, and active ingredient(s); location and description of treated area(s); the time and date of the application and the restricted-entry interval (REI);
- The name, address, and telephone number of the nearest emergency medical facility; and
- An EPA WPS safety poster.



Employers must tell workers and handlers where the information is posted and allow them access. Be sure the information remains legible and notify your employees of any changes to the emergency medical facility information.

Decontamination Sites



Employers must provide a site where workers and handlers can wash pesticides and residues from their hands and body.

A decontamination site must contain:

- Enough water for routine and emergency whole-body washing and for eyeflushing (at least one gallon per worker and three gallons per handler, plus one pint of eye flush per handler); and
- Plenty of soap and single-use towels;
- A clean coverall, for use by handlers.

A decontamination site must be within 1/4 mile of the employees' work site. If the work place is more than 1/4 mile from the nearest point of vehicular access, the decontamination site may be located at the nearest access point. Handler employers must also provide a decontamination site:

- Where handlers remove their personal protective equipment (PPE) at the end of a task; and
- At each mixing site.

Emergency eyeflush water must be **immediately available**, if the pesticide label calls for protective eyewear.

The decontamination site may not be located in an area under restricted entry, unless it serves handlers working in that area. In this case, all supplies must be protected from contamination.

Emergency Assistance

When any handler or worker may have been poisoned or injured by pesticides, an employer must promptly make transportation available to an appropriate medical facility. Be prepared to provide the victim and medical personnel with:

- The product name, EPA registration number, and active ingredient(s);



- All first aid and medical information from the label;
- A description of how the pesticide was used; and
- Information about the victim's exposure.

Pesticide Safety Training



Handlers and workers must be trained **every five (5) years**, unless they are certified applicators. Handlers must be trained before they do any handling activity. Agricultural employers must assure that untrained workers receive basic pesticide safety information before they enter a treated area, and all untrained workers must receive complete training within five days.

Who may conduct training? Training may be conducted by a certified applicator or by someone who has completed a train-the-trainer program. Training may be done orally and/or audiovisually, but must be in a manner and language that employees can understand, using easily understood terms or an interpreter. Trainers must

respond to questions.

Information Exchange

An agricultural employer must be informed when a pesticide is to be applied on his/her agricultural establishment by a commercial handler (commercial applicator). The commercial handler employer must provide the agricultural employer all the information needed to be posted at the central location, plus:

- Whether both oral warnings and treated area posting are required; and
- Any other protection requirements on the label for workers or other people.



The agricultural employer, on the other hand, must make sure the commercial handler employer is aware of:

- All areas on the agricultural establishment where pesticides will be applied or where an REI will be in effect while the commercial handler is on the establishment; and
- Entry restrictions for those areas.

ADDITIONAL DUTIES FOR WORKER EMPLOYERS

Agricultural employers must also provide some additional protections specifically for their workers.



Restrictions During Applications

An employer must keep all workers, other than trained and equipped handlers, out of areas being treated with pesticides. Under some application conditions, nursery and greenhouse workers must also be kept an additional distance from the treated area. Consult the Worker Protection Standard for special application restrictions for nurseries and greenhouses

REIs

The REI is the time immediately after a pesticide application when entry into the treated area is limited. During an REI, **do not allow workers to enter** a treated area or contact anything treated with the pesticide to which the REI applies.

REIs are located on the pesticide label. When two (or more) pesticides are applied at the same time and have different REIs, you must follow the longer interval.

Notice About Applications

Employers must notify workers about pesticide applications on the establishment. In most cases, employers may choose between oral warnings or posted warning signs, but they must tell workers which warning method is in effect. For some pesticides, however, employers have to do both.

Posted warning signs must be:

- At least 14" X 16" in size, in a design similar to the one above;
- Posted 24 hours or less before application, during the REI, and removed before workers enter and within three (3) days after the end of the REI; and
- Posted so they can be seen at all normal entrances to treated areas, including entrances from labor camps.



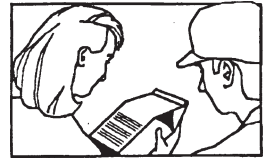
Oral warnings must be delivered in a manner understood by workers, using an interpreter, if necessary. Oral warnings must contain the following information:

- Location and description of treated area,
- The REI; and
- Specific directions not to enter during the REI.

Specific Instructions for Handlers

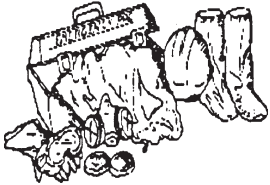
Handler employers must make sure that before any handling task, the handlers:

- Are given information from the pesticide's labeling regarding its safe use;
- Have access to the labeling during the entire handling task; and
- Are instructed in the safe operation of the equipment they will be using.



Commercial handler employers must make sure their employees are aware of areas on an establishment where pesticides have been applied or where an REI is in effect and are aware of restrictions on entering those areas.

PPE



When PPE is required by product labeling, the handler employer must:

- Provide the PPE to each pesticide handler;
- Clean and maintain the PPE correctly;
- Make sure that each handler wears and uses the PPE correctly;
- Provide each handler a clean place to put on and remove PPE and to store personal clothing;
- Take action, if necessary, to prevent heat-related illness while PPE is being worn; and
- Not allow any handler to wear or to take home PPE used for handling activities.

Cleaning and Maintaining PPE

The employer must make sure:

- PPE is cleaned, inspected, and repaired before each use;
- PPE is cleaned according to manufacturer's instructions;
- PPE that is non-reusable or cannot be cleaned is disposed of;
- Clothing drenched with pesticide concentrates labeled *DANGER* or *WARNING* are disposed of;
- PPE is washed and stored separately from personal clothing;
- Clean PPE is dried appropriately; and
- Respirator filters, cartridges; and canisters are replaced as often as required.

The handler employer must make sure anyone cleaning PPE is informed of possible pesticide residues on PPE, of the potentially harmful effects of pesticides, and of the correct ways to handle and clean PPE.

Equipment Safety

Handler employers must make sure that equipment used for mixing, loading, transferring, or applying pesticides is inspected and repaired or replaced as needed.

Only appropriately trained and equipped handlers may repair, clean, or adjust pesticide handling equipment that contains pesticides or pesticide residues.

All pesticide products affected by the WPS carry a statement under the new Agricultural Use Directions section of the labeling. This statement instructs users they must comply with all provisions of the WPS. If you are using a pesticide product with labeling that refers to the Worker Protection Standard, you must comply with the WPS.



For more information about the Worker Protection Standard, contact:

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