



Worker Protection Standard

Duties of Employers

The Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides (WPS) is a regulation issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect persons who use pesticides in the production of agricultural plants on farms, and in forests, nurseries, and greenhouses. The WPS requires employers to take steps to reduce the risk of pesticide-related illness and injury for themselves and the people they employ.

The WPS covers:

- **Agricultural workers** - perform tasks related to the cultivation and harvesting of plants on farms or in greenhouses, nurseries, or forests;
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Employers are responsible for making sure workers and handlers receive the protections required by the pesticide label and the WPS.

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

This booklet explains WPS requirements.

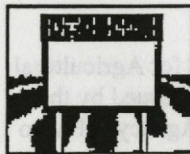
However, whether or not you employ workers and handlers, at a minimum, YOU will be required to comply with new personal protective equipment and restricted entry statements on the pesticide labels.

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Duties of all Employers

Some WPS protections that employers must provide to their employees 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.

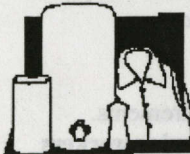
Employers must tell workers and handlers where the information is posted and allow them access to the information. Be sure that the information remains legible and notify your employees of any changes to the emergency medical facility information.

Decontamination Sites

Employers must provide sites so that workers and handlers can wash pesticides and residues from their hands and body.

Decontamination supplies must include:

- Enough water for routine and emergency whole-body washing and for eye flushing;
- Soap;
- Single-use towels; and,
- A clean coverall, for use by handlers.



Decontamination materials 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 materials may be located at the nearest access

point. Handler employers must also provide decontamination materials:

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

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

The decontamination materials may not be located in an area under restricted entry unless they serve handlers working in that area. In this case, all materials must be protected from contamination.

Emergency Assistance

If there is reason to believe that a handler or worker may have been poisoned or injured by pesticides, an employer must promptly make transportation to an appropriate medical facility available to that person. 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.

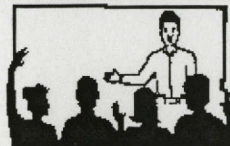


Pesticide Safety Training

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.

Workers must receive complete WPS training by the 5th day of entering into an area on an agricultural establishment that has been treated or under an REI in the last 30 days. They must



receive basic pesticide safety information before entering a treated area. Training may be conducted by a licensed applicator or by someone

who has completed a train-the-trainer program. Training may be given orally and/or audiovisually, but must be in a manner and language that employees can understand, using easily understood terms, and if necessary, an interpreter. Trainers must answer 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 or custom applicator). The commercial handler employer must provide the agricultural employer with 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. It is the responsibility of each employer to provide his/her employees with the protections required under WPS.

Additional Duties of Worker Employers

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

Restrictions During Applications

An employer must keep all workers out of areas being treated with pesticides. Only properly trained and properly equipped handlers are allowed in areas being treated. Under some conditions, nursery and greenhouse workers

must also be kept a certain distance from the treated area. Consult the Worker Protection Standard for special application restrictions for nurseries and greenhouses.

Restricted-Entry Intervals (REIs)

The restricted-entry interval is the time immediately after a pesticide application when entry into the treated area is limited. During an REI, **do not allow workers** (including owner and family members) **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 methods is in effect. For some pesticides, however, employers have to do both. Posted signs must be:

- At least 14" X 16" in size, in a design similar to the one above;
- Can substitute language commonly spoken and read by workers for the Spanish portion;
- Posted 24 hours or less before application; during the REI and removed before workers enter and within 3 days after the REI ends;
- 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 include:

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

Additional Duties of Handler Employers

Employers are required to provide additional protections to their handlers.

Application Restrictions

Do not allow handlers to apply a pesticide so that it contacts, directly or through drift, anyone other than trained and PPE-equipped handlers.

Monitoring

Sight or voice contact (radio etc.) must be made at least every two hours with anyone handling pesticides labeled with a skull and crossbones (signal word: DANGER-POISON). When using a fumigant in an enclosed area, monitoring must be constant with access to PPE necessary for rescue.

Specific Instructions for Handlers

Handler employers must ensure that before any handling task handlers:

- Are given information from the pesticides label regarding safe use,
- Have access to the label 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.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



Employers must provide handlers with the PPE as listed on the pesticide label. The employer must:

- Maintain PPE in a clean and operational condition;
- Make sure it fits correctly;
- Make sure handler wears and uses the PPE correctly;

- Provide a clean place to put on and remove PPE, and store personal clothing;
- Not allow worker to wear or take home PPE;
- Take action to prevent heat-related illness while PPE is worn.

Cleaning and Maintaining PPE

Employers must make sure:

- PPE is cleaned according to manufacturer's instructions, inspected, and repaired before each use;
- PPE that is non-reusable or cannot be cleaned, must be disposed of properly;
- Clothing drenched with pesticide labeled DANGER or WARNING are discarded;
- PPE must be washed and dried properly, and stored separately from personal clothing;
- 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.



Pesticide labels reflect the Worker Protection Standard requirements under the Agricultural Use Directions section. **When you use 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: Texas Department of Agriculture (512) 463-7622 or 1-800-TELL-TDA Relay Texas: 1-800-735-2988 (voice); 1-800-735-2989 (TDD) Web address: <http://www.agr.state.tx.us>

Texas Department of Agriculture
Susan Combs, Commissioner
P.O. Box 12847
Austin, TX 78711



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