

EPA Worker Protection Standard FAQ's

Farm Worker Protection Education

Who does the WPS protect?

The WPS requires employers to take steps to protect two types of agricultural employees: **workers** and **pesticide handlers**.

A WORKER is anyone who: (1) is employed (including self-employed) for any type of compensation; and (2) performing tasks, such as harvesting, weeding or watering, relating to the production of agricultural plants on a farm, forest, nursery or greenhouse.

A PESTICIDE HANDLER is anyone who: (1) is employed (including self-employed) for any type of compensation by an agricultural establishment or a commercial pesticide handling establishment that uses pesticides in the production of agricultural plants on a farm, forest, nursery or greenhouse; and, (2) performing any of the following tasks:

- Mixing, loading, transferring or applying pesticides,;
- Handling open containers of pesticides;
- Acting as a flagger;
- Cleaning, handling, adjusting or repairing the parts of mixing, loading or application equipment that may contain pesticide residues;
- Assisting with the application of pesticides, including incorporating the pesticide into the soil after the application has occurred;
- Entering a greenhouse or other enclosed area after application and before the inhalation exposure level listed on the product label has been reached or one of the WPS ventilation criteria has been met to:
 - o operate ventilation equipment;
 - o adjust or remove coverings, such as tarps used in fumigation; or
 - o check air concentration levels;
- Entering a treated area outdoors after application of any soil fumigant to adjust or remove soil coverings, such as tarpaulins,
- Performing tasks as a crop advisor:
 - o during any pesticide application,;
 - o before any inhalation exposure level or ventilation criteria listed on the label has been reached or one of the WPS ventilation criteria has been met;
 - o during any restricted-entry interval;
- Disposing of pesticides or pesticide containers.

**** Owners of agricultural establishments and members of their immediate families are exempt from many WPS requirements.**

Pesticide Safety Training:

- The pesticide safety training for pesticide handlers must be conducted before pesticide handlers perform any handling task.
- If the agricultural employer hires an untrained agricultural worker, WPS basic pesticide safety information must be provided at the hiring time and training must be conducted within five days.
- The pesticide safety training for both pesticide handlers and agricultural workers is good for five years.

Central Location:

Worker and handler employers **must** make sure that certain information is displayed at a central location whenever (1) any worker or pesticide handler whom they employ is on their agricultural establishment, and (2) a pesticide is about to be applied or has been recently applied.

What information must be displayed?

The following three types of information must be displayed:

- **Application list**, which must include:
 - o The location and description of the area to be treated,
 - o Product name,
 - o EPA Registration number,
 - o Active ingredient – common or chemical name –,
 - o Time and date the pesticide is scheduled to be applied, and
 - o Restricted-entry interval for the pesticide.
- **Emergency information**, which must include the name, telephone number, and address of the nearest emergency medical facility, and
- **A pesticide safety poster**, which must be either the WPS safety poster developed by EPA or an equivalent poster that meets the EPA criteria for safety poster.

This information must be displayed whenever **any worker or handler** you employ is on your agricultural establishment and, in the past 30 days, a pesticide has been applied or a restricted-entry interval has been in effect. It must be displayed continuously for 30 days.

Decontamination Site:

Handler and worker employers **MUST** make sure that a decontamination site is provided for washing off pesticides and pesticide residues while handlers and workers are performing their tasks.

When must the site be provided?

- HANDLERS - for the duration of the handling task.
- WORKERS – Between 7-30 days depending on the REI of the pesticide.

The decontamination site must have water, soap, and single-use towels. In addition to this, at the handler decontamination site, a clean change of clothes is required.

If the pesticide label requires protective eyewear for pesticide handlers, an emergency eye flush solution must be provided.

Employer information exchange:

Professional applicators must make sure that their customer knows certain information about the pesticide before it is applied on the establishment.

Agricultural employers must make sure that, whenever a professional applicator will be doing pesticide handling tasks on their establishment, the professional applicator's employer knows specific information concerning treated areas on the agricultural establishment.

The following information must be provided by the professional applicator to their customers – agricultural employers – about:

- The specific location and description of the area (s) on the agricultural establishment that are to be treated with a pesticide;
- Time and date the pesticide is scheduled to be applied;
- Product name, EPA registration number, and active ingredient (s);
- Restricted entry-interval for the pesticide;
- Whether the pesticide labeling required both treated-area posting **and** oral notification, and

Any other specific requirements on the pesticide label concerning protection of workers and other persons during or after application.

***** If the pesticide is not applied as scheduled, the agricultural employer must be informed of the corrected time and date of application.***

Emergency Assistance: The worker and handler employer must provide emergency assistance to anyone who is employed as a worker or handler on their farm, forest, nursery or greenhouse, or on their commercial pesticide-handling establishment.

The employer can provide transportation by:

- Assure that the employee has transportation to the nearest medical facility, or
- By calling 911 or an ambulance service.

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture has established a program called "Compliance Assistance," which provides information to the agricultural employers and professional applicators to assist them to comply with this standard. Also, the WPS bilingual staff is available to provide training for your employees (workers and handlers) in English or Spanish.

Specific information can be obtained by referring to the 40 CFR part 170, or by referring the EPA's How To Comply manual.

For more information concerning the Worker Protection Standard contact:

- [Luis A. Urias](#), Agricultural Program Specialist (208) 332-8663 (Boise)
- [Chuck Hawley](#), Agriculture Investigator, SR. (208) 762-9586 (CdA),
- [George Robinson](#), Administrator (208) 332-8531 (Boise)

or write:

**Idaho State Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 790
Boise, ID 83701
(208) 334-3547 (FAX)**