

THE WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD FOR THE USE OF AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDES



Tips on Working Safely with Pesticides in North Carolina

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS) is a regulation from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designed to limit worker's exposure to pesticides. In North Carolina, this regulation is enforced by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS).

The WPS requires owners or managers of an agricultural establishment (any farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse) to provide employees with specific information, equipment, and services. This fact sheet outlines key provisions of the WPS. For more details, see Training Resources below. WPS covers any pesticide that has an "*Agricultural Use Requirement*" section on the label. The label information **does not** provide all that is needed to comply with the WPS.

Terms to Know

Handler: Individual employed at farms to mix, load, transfer, or apply pesticides, or do other tasks that bring them into direct contact with pesticides.

Worker: Individual employed to do tasks involved in production, such as weeding, planting, cultivating, pruning, and harvesting. By definition, "workers" do not apply pesticides or handle pesticide application equipment.

Restricted Entry Interval (REI): The waiting period after a pesticide has been applied, usually between 4 and 48 hours, during which entry into the treated area is prohibited.

Early Entry: Entrance into a treated area before the REI expires. Early entry within the first 4 hours after a pesticide application is prohibited.

Early Entry Worker: A fully trained and equipped worker who is able to perform limited tasks during an REI.

Training Resources and WPS Information

- The WPS safety poster is available from NCDA&CS (919-733-3556) or your local Cooperative Extension Center.
- The entire WPS regulations are summarized in an EPA manual entitled, "*The Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides-How to Comply: What Employers Need to Know*". Call NCDA&CS to request a copy.
- Further details about the WPS are available at the following Web site:
<http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/twor.html>.
- A videotape entitled, *El Terror Invisible-Pesticide Safety for North Carolina*, was produced in Spanish with English subtitles. If you show specific segments of the video and answer questions, you have fulfilled the WPS training requirements for workers and handlers. It is available from NCDA&CS.

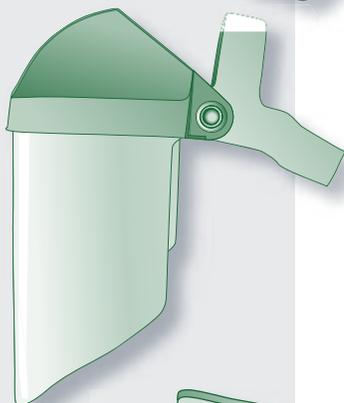
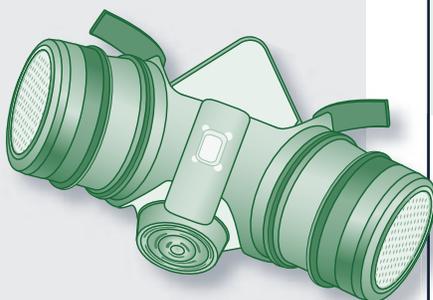
The information in this document is for educational purposes only. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use conforms to the product label and complies with current regulations.

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**DANGER PELIGRO
PESTICIDES PESTICIDAS**



**KEEP OUT
NO ENTRE**



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WPS REQUIREMENTS

The WPS requires employers to protect both workers and handlers (**see Terms to Know**). Be aware that someone may be a “worker” while completing one task and a “handler” while completing a different task.

What employers must do for both workers and handlers:

- Provide information at a central location, including the WPS safety poster (**see Training Resources on front page**); the name, address, and telephone number of the nearest emergency medical facility; and a list of dates and times that pesticides have been applied within the last 30 days, including a description of each treated area, the product name, EPA registration number, active ingredient(s), and REI for each pesticide on that list.
- Provide pesticide safety training (**see How to Conduct Training below**).
- Provide a decontamination site that supplies at least 3 gallons of clean water per handler and 1 gallon per worker, soap, and single-use towels. The water must not be used for mixing pesticides unless it is equipped with a functioning check valve or anti-siphoning device.
- Make emergency transportation available in the event that an employee is poisoned or injured by pesticides.
- Provide the treating medical facility with pesticide product information upon request.

What employers must do for workers:

- Notify them about applications, either verbally or with a WPS-approved field sign (depending on the label specifications). Workers must be informed which notification method is being used.
- Protect them during applications.
- Observe restricted-entry intervals (**see Terms to Know**) found on labels
- Provide label specified personal protective equipment (PPE) in a clean and operational condition for early-entry worker (**see Terms to Know**).

What employers must do for handlers:

- Monitor (every 2 hours) handlers applying pesticides labeled with a skull and crossbones
- Provide a clean change of clothes (e.g., a one-piece coverall) at the decontamination site
- Give specific instructions to handlers concerning the pesticide label and equipment operation.
- Inspect safety equipment before each day’s use. Repair or discard any damaged equipment.
- Provide and properly maintain PPE; product labels specify which PPE must be worn.

How to Conduct Training

WPS training may be conducted by either a certified pesticide applicator or someone who has completed an NCDA&CS train-the-trainer program. An employee who has been trained as a handler can only train workers. The training must be conducted in a manner and language that the employees can understand using EPA-approved training materials. Employees must have the opportunity to ask questions during the training session.

There are two general types of WPS training programs: basic and complete. A thorough review of the WPS safety poster will satisfy the basic training requirement. The complete safety training program consists of eleven additional topics.

Employers must assure that untrained workers receive basic safety information before they enter into an area where an REI was in effect in the last 30 days. By the fifth day of their employment, all untrained workers must receive the complete WPS safety training.

Handlers and early-entry workers must be trained before they begin work. Handler training consists of the complete training program plus six points that emphasize health hazards and environmental concerns. Early-entry training for workers consists of the complete training program with additional instruction on labeling, health hazards, first aid, and the proper use of PPE. See Training Resources on front page for educational materials.

Workers and handlers must be retrained every 5 years. The employer must keep a record of the date, the participants, and the trainer(s) involved in each training session. Employees who are currently certified to apply restricted-use pesticides, or who can verify that they have been trained within the last 5 years, are not required to be trained.

For questions regarding human health and pesticides, call the Carolinas Poison Center 1-800-848-6946 (1-800-84TOXIN).