

California's Proposed Methyl Iodide Use Controls Will Be Much Stricter

There are major differences between how methyl iodide is used in other states in accordance with instructions on the federally approved product label and how it would be used here, with extra restrictions that DPR is proposing. This is because DPR's regulatory concentration target levels (that is, the allowable exposures) and use controls are significantly more stringent and health-protective than U.S. EPA's.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	California Department of Pesticide Regulation
Allowable exposure for methyl iodide workers, two times higher at 193 parts per billion (ppb). For others (those not handling or using methyl iodide), five times higher at 150 ppb.	Lower allowable exposure levels: 96 ppb for licensed professionals who apply or handle methyl iodide. For others, 32 parts per billion averaged over 24 hours. .
Requires no permit to use methyl iodide.	Restricted material, requiring a site-specific permit from the county agricultural commissioner, who can impose extra use restrictions tailored to the application site.
Smaller buffer zones, ranging from 25 to 500 feet. (Buffer zones surround a pesticide application; pesticides are not applied there and certain activities are restricted for specified periods to protect health and safety.)	Larger buffer zones of 100 to 2,500 feet for all applications, depending on application method and rate, and treated acreage.
Buffer zone around these sites is smaller at one-quarter mile.	Bigger buffer zone around schools, hospitals, nursing homes and similar sites, a buffer zone of at least one-half mile.
Both standard and virtually impermeable film (VIF) tarps allowed.	Prohibit standard tarps , only VIF allowed. (VIF tarps contain a gas-impermeable layer designed to suppress fumigant movement into air.)
More area can be treated at one time – 40 acres, regardless of application method.	Fewer acres can be treated at once: A maximum of 20 to 30 acres, depending on the method.
No limit on time of application.	Prohibit night applications , which typically result in higher levels of fumigant in the still night air.
Maximum application rate is higher, 175 pounds an acre.	Reduced application rates of 75 to 125 pounds an acre, depending on application method and crop.
Ground water protections are more limited.	Stricter groundwater restrictions such as buffer zones around wellheads and application limits in vulnerable areas.
Workers can reenter fields sooner, intervals range from 5 to 10 days.	Extended time before workers can reenter fields , 14 days.
Posting and monitoring of buffer zones not required on all products.	Posting/monitoring of buffer zones: certified applicator to manage and maintain the buffer zone, such as posting fumigant warning signs around perimeter.
No requirement to eliminate pesticide drip when equipment out of soil.	Applicator must eliminate pesticide drip before application equipment lifted or removed from soil