

# PESTICIDE SAFETY



Information

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

A No. 4

## First Aid — How do I get ready for an emergency?

**In case of an emergency, your employer must make arrangements ahead of time to provide emergency medical care to workers who handle pesticides or enter fields where pesticides have been applied.** You should know the name of this clinic or hospital and where it is. If you don't know, ask your employer before an emergency happens. Never let sick or hurt people drive themselves to a doctor. They could have an accident on the road.

### What should I do if someone collapses while they are using pesticides, or working in a field?

- Get the person away from the pesticides if you can without hurting yourself. Remember the sick person might have pesticides on them that could get on you.
- Get help RIGHT AWAY. If you have a phone, call 911.
- Try to stop pesticides from getting in or on the person's body. You can find out how later in this handout.
- If the person is not breathing, give CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) if you know how. The emergency responders will take over when they arrive.

**REMEMBER:** Tell the emergency responders about the pesticide(s). Also, remember that pesticides may not be the problem. It could, for instance, be a heart attack.

### What should I do if someone swallows a pesticide?

- Get help RIGHT AWAY. If you have a phone, call 911, or the free phone number for California Poison Control Center, 1-800-222-1222.



- If people are sleepy or unconscious from poisoning and you don't have a phone, **TAKE THEM TO A DOCTOR OR HOSPITAL RIGHT AWAY. DO NOT** give them anything to eat or drink. **DO NOT** try to make them throw up.
- If the person is awake and alert, follow the first aid instructions on the label. These directions will tell you what will be helpful or dangerous. For instance, making the person throw up, or giving them milk or water to drink could be helpful, or it might be dangerous, depending on the pesticide. Never use salt water or mustard to make people throw up. Some old labels may still recommend those things, but they are not safe.

### What should I do if I get sick from pesticides?

If you have a pesticide label, know what the label says about first aid.

- Stop work and leave the area **RIGHT AWAY**. You must stop working with the pesticide and stop any more from getting into your body. Read below to find out how to do this.
- **GET HELP**. Tell someone at your workplace what happened.
- Ask your employer to take you to a doctor or hospital. **DO NOT TAKE YOURSELF.**

### How can pesticides get into my body?

**There are four ways:**

1. Breathing dust, mist, or vapor.
2. Getting it on your skin.
3. Getting it in your eyes.
4. Swallowing the pesticide.

#### To Stop a Person from Breathing in Pesticides:

Take any sick people where the air is clean. In open areas, go at least 100 feet away. If there is a wind, make sure the wind is blowing the pesticide away from you.

#### Pesticides on your Skin—

Most often, pesticides get in your body through your skin. Some pesticides move very fast through your skin. Others move slowly. Many pesticides can move through your clothes, even if they are water-proof. That is why it is important to get rid of any pesticide on your skin or clothing right away.

#### To Get Pesticides Off Your Skin:

- Take off all clothes that have pesticides on them.
- Shower with soap and clean under your nails. If you don't have a shower or soap, use any clean water.
- Wash your hair.



- Get dressed only in clean clothes. Do not put clothes with pesticides on them back on. If you do, more pesticides can get into your body.

Be sure to wash any clothes that have pesticides on them separately and completely before wearing them again. Ask your employer for a copy of the A-7 safety leaflet for information on how to wash clothes safely.

### To Get Pesticides Out of your Eyes:

- Rinse eyes with plenty of water. Keep rinsing for at least 15 minutes. Rinsing in a shower is okay, but **DO NOT** use a hard spray.
- Otherwise, pour water over your eyes or use a gentle flow from a faucet or hose.
- Blink while you are rinsing.
- **NEVER** force anybody's eyes open.



### What do I need to tell the doctor?

Be ready to tell the doctor or nurse exactly what happened with the pesticide to make people sick. Warn the doctor or nurse that the person might be sick from pesticides so they can protect themselves. If you know, tell the doctor the age of the sick people, and what pesticide was involved. Bring any information about the pesticide to show the doctor. Bring the label or the name of the pesticide from the label, its active ingredient(s), and EPA registration number. If you can't do this, and have no other choice, bring the clean empty pesticide container (with the label still on it) or an unused, sealed container.

Always tell your employer if someone gets sick or hurt at work.



*If you don't get all the information you need in your training, you should call your County Agricultural Commissioner, or the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) for more information. You can find the Commissioner's number in your local white pages phone directory, by calling 1-87PestLine, or at:*

<http://www.cdfr.ca.gov/exec/county/countymap/>

DPR's Regional Offices are:

- Northern (West Sacramento) 916/376-8960
- Central (Clovis) 559/297-3511
- Southern (Anaheim) 714/279-7690

**Pesticide Complaint?**

**1-87PestLine**  
INFORMATION LINE

**1-877-378-5463**

