

# Pesticide

# info

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PESTICIDES

## How does California regulate pesticide use?



### California Department of Pesticide Regulation

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www.cdpr.ca.gov

#### BRANCHES

**Enforcement**  
916-324-4100

**Northern Regional Office**  
916-376-8960

**Central Regional Office**  
559-297-3511

**Southern Regional Office**  
714-279-7690

**Environmental Monitoring**  
916-324-4039

**Fiscal Operations**  
916-324-1350

**Human Health Assessment**  
916-445-4233

**Information Technology**  
916-445-2992

**Personnel**  
916-322-4553

**Pest Management  
and Licensing**  
916-445-4038

**Pesticide Registration**  
916-445-4400

**Product Compliance**  
916-445-4159

**Worker Health and Safety**  
916-445-4222

Pesticides play a unique role in environmental protection. Contradicting the usual preventive approach, pesticides are toxic by design and deliberately released into nature. This paradox is explained by the fact that, when used properly, both natural and synthetic pesticides protect people and their environment from pests—animal, plant or microbial—that threaten human health and the balance of nature. Indeed, nature created the first chemical pesticides, produced by some plants and animals to repel their natural enemies.

Over time, people observed, adapted, and improved on natural pest management. Like most human endeavors, the beneficial use of pesticides depends on information and sound judgment. Scientific knowledge of pesticides continually evolves and improves.

### Approach based on science

California's approach is based on a strong scientific foundation. The state has built the most comprehensive state pesticide regulation program in the nation. Our task is to ensure that pesticides are used safely. Our standards are uncompromising, like our commitment to protect people and the environment.

California has regulated pesticides for more than a century. Residents—

through their lawmakers—have established a comprehensive body of law to control every aspect of pesticide sales and use, and to ensure the state's pesticide regulators also have the tools to assess the impacts of that use.

The first pesticide-related law was passed in California in 1901, and since the 1960s, a body of modern, increasingly science-based pesticide law and regulation has come into being. The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) is not only the premier state agency for pesticide regulation in the U.S., but has built a reputation for world-class science and regulatory decision-making that makes it the acknowledged peer of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Health Canada.

### What is a pesticide?

"Pesticide" is an umbrella term that includes many kinds of chemicals—natural and synthetic. A pesticide is any substance intended to control, destroy, repel or attract a pest. Any living organism that causes damage, economic loss, and/or transmits or produces disease may be the target pest.

Some common pesticides include insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides, molluscicides, fungicides, repellents, disinfectants and sanitizers.

# An integrated approach

## DPR's mission is to protect health and the environment

DPR's mission is to protect human health and the environment by regulating pesticide sales and use and by fostering reduced-risk pest management. DPR is funded by regulatory fees and has about 400 employees, including a large number of scientists from many different disciplines.

A portion of DPR's budget supports local pesticide enforcement by the state's county agricultural commissioners. Under DPR oversight, the commissioners and the approximately 250 biologists who work for them serve as the local enforcement agents for pesticide laws and regulations in the state's 58 counties.

Among other duties, county agricultural commissioners are responsible for issuing the site- and time-specific permits required to use restricted pesticides in agriculture. No other state has a permitting system for use of highly hazardous pesticides, and few states have effective mechanisms for local enforcement of pesticide laws.

## Integrated network of programs

DPR monitors the use of pesticides from farm fields to grocery shelves to assure the safety of workers and the public.

Regulatory activities are conducted by DPR's seven Pesticide Program Division branches: Pesticide Registration, Human Health Assessment, Worker Health and Safety, Enforcement, Environmental Monitoring, Product Compliance, and Pest Management and Licensing. This integrated network includes:

- Evaluation and registration of pesticide products before sale or use in California. If manufacturers cannot demonstrate that their products can be used safely to protect workers, consumers and their children, and others who may be exposed to pesticides, DPR will not allow the pesticide to be used.

- Statewide licensing of commercial applicators, dealers, consultants, and other pesticide professionals to ensure they are adequately trained to use pesticides safely.
- Evaluation of health impacts of pesticides through risk assessment and illness surveillance. DPR does comprehensive assessments of pesticide risks to all populations (workers, children, other sensitive groups) from exposure via air, water, and food, and in the home and workplace. All reported pesticide-related illnesses are investigated and DPR uses this data to evaluate its regulatory program and to fine-tune safety rules.
- Determining practices to ensure a safe pesticide workplace.
- Monitoring potential health and environmental impacts of previously registered pesticides, helping find ways to prevent future contamination.
- Residue testing of fresh fruit and vegetables, sampling domestic and imported produce from wholesale and retail outlets, distribution centers, and farmers markets.
- Through grants, awards and regulatory incentives, DPR supports development and adoption of pest management practices designed to encourage reductions in pesticide use in favor of more natural pest controls, and to reduce or eliminate harmful environmental and health impacts of pesticides.

## More info?

Go to [www.cdpr.ca.gov](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov), and click on "About DPR."

DPR is one of five boards and departments within the California Environmental Protection Agency.

**DPR protects public health and the environment with the nation's most rigorous and comprehensive program to evaluate and control pesticide use.**



Single copies of this handout are available by calling your County Agricultural Commissioner's office, from DPR at 916-445-3974, or can be downloaded from DPR's Web site, [www.cdpr.ca.gov](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov), "Consumer Fact Sheets."

**Pesticide Complaint ?**

**1-87PestLine**  
INFORMATION LINE

**1-877-378-5463**

