

Pesticide

info

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PESTICIDES



California Department of Pesticide Regulation

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BRANCHES:

Enforcement

916-324-4100

Northern Regional Office

916-324-4100

Central Regional Office

559-243-8111

Southern Regional Office

714-279-7690

Environmental Monitoring

916-324-4039

Fiscal Operations

916-324-1350

Information Technology

916-445-4110

Medical Toxicology

916-445-4233

Mill Assessment

916-445-4159

Pest Management and Licensing

916-445-3914

Licensing/Certification

916-445-4038

Personnel

916-322-4553

Pesticide Registration

916-445-4400

Worker Health and Safety

916-445-4222

Pesticide complaints? You have the right to...

Reporting complaints about pesticide use

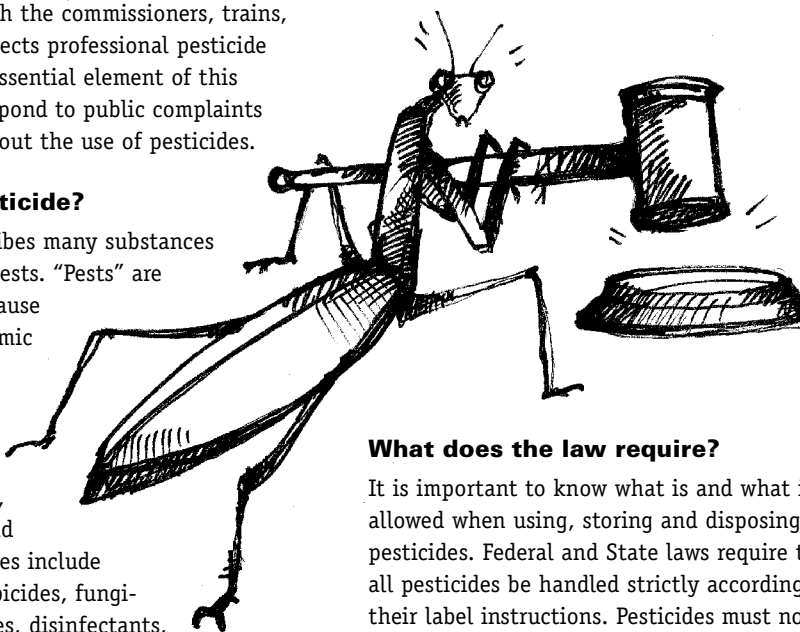
Cal/EPA's Department of Pesticide Regulation and your local county agricultural commissioner share joint responsibility for monitoring and regulating the use of pesticides to protect the safety of workers, the public, and the environment. Through state and county pesticide regulatory programs, DPR evaluates pesticides before they are sold or used in the state, conducts air and water monitoring studies, samples produce for pesticide residues, and with the commissioners, trains, licenses and inspects professional pesticide applicators. An essential element of this program is to respond to public complaints and questions about the use of pesticides.

What is a pesticide?

"Pesticide" describes many substances used to control pests. "Pests" are organisms that cause damage or economic loss, or transmit disease. Pests include insects, weeds, plant diseases, rodents, algae, viruses, and bacteria. Pesticides include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides, disinfectants, and other kinds of pest-controlling chemicals, including many household products.

Who uses pesticides?

Many people and companies use pesticides, including farmers and ranchers, structural pest control services, agricultural pest control businesses, landscape gardeners, janitorial companies, water purveyors, swimming pool maintenance services, health care personnel, and government agencies. Because many cleaning products you use around your home as well as insect and garden sprays are all likely to be registered as pesticides, consumers also use a variety of pesticides.



What does the law require?

It is important to know what is and what isn't allowed when using, storing and disposing of pesticides. Federal and State laws require that all pesticides be handled strictly according to their label instructions. Pesticides must not be allowed to drift, run off or move off target, or be used in any way not approved by the label, law, or regulation. Moreover, some agricultural

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and professional structural pesticides require that users get a special permit from the county agricultural commissioner (who has the authority to strictly control how, where – or even if – these pesticides are used).

Businesses hired to apply pesticides must be licensed by DPR and registered with the agricultural commissioner before performing pest control work. They must have permission to treat someone's property and they must give the property owner information about the chemicals being used. Commercial applicators include landscape gardeners and agricultural and structural pest control companies.

Anyone who uses pesticides – be it farmer, structural pest control company, or a neighbor – is required to use due care when applying pesticides, to avoid harming themselves, anyone else, or the environment.

What if you have a complaint?

If you suspect a pesticide is being used improperly, notify your county agricultural commissioner's office as soon as possible. (You can find the phone number on DPR's Web site <www.cdpr.ca.gov> and in the county government section of your phone book white pages.) The commissioner's office will investigate your complaint. Be prepared to provide specific details – for example, where the incident occurred, the time of day, what you saw, and who was involved. You can ask to remain anonymous.

The county agricultural commissioners and their staffs have primary responsibility for local enforcement activities. Training, coordination, oversight, and technical and legal support is provided by DPR staff at headquarters in Sacramento and at regional and field offices in Anaheim, Fresno, Ventura, West Sacramento, Bakersfield, and Watsonville. If you still have questions after talking to your county agricultural commissioner, you can call DPR's regional or field office in your area for further information and assistance, or call DPR headquarters in Sacramento.

In addition, people who use pesticides in an agricultural setting must file detailed reports on their pesticide use monthly with their

commissioner's office. Structural pest control companies also file reports on pesticide use. Most records kept by agricultural commissioners are public information; if you want to review documents or get copies, you should ask your commissioner's office about the procedure it uses to provide this information. Annual summaries of statewide pesticide use are also available on DPR's Web site.

How will your complaint be investigated?

DPR and the county agricultural commissioners respond to all pesticide-related complaints from both the public and industry. If they find a violation, appropriate corrective or enforcement action will be taken. (However, legal actions can only be taken against violations of laws and regulations over which the commissioner or DPR has authority.) These are the steps a commissioner generally takes to investigate a pesticide-related complaint:

- Contact the parties involved.
- Determine if a pesticide has been used.
- Determine if a violation has occurred.
- Take appropriate corrective or enforcement action if there is proof of a violation.
- If appropriate, facilitate voluntary cooperative measures to avoid future problems.

What if you think pesticide exposure made you ill?

The commissioner, with technical help from DPR, investigates all pesticide-related illnesses. If you have symptoms you believe are related to pesticide exposure, it is important that a doctor examines you. Doctors in California are required to report all pesticide-related illnesses. Medical documentation of an illness is very helpful in investigating a possible pesticide violation. You can also call the poison control center toll-free, **1-800-876-4766**. Specialists there will provide you free information on whether your symptoms may be related to pesticide exposure and give you advice on treatment.



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, "Consumer Fact Sheets."