

# PESTICIDE SAFETY



Information

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

A No. 9

## Pesticide Safety Rules For Farmworkers

**The pesticide label, your training, and this leaflet, tell you about pesticide dangers at work.** Your employer must know and help you learn about the pesticides used where you work, and how to protect yourself. Pesticides are chemicals that are used to control unwanted insects, weeds, and plant diseases.

**EMPLOYERS:** This is the hazard communication leaflet for fieldworkers. Fill in the blank lines in this leaflet and display this handout where employees work in treated fields.

**FERTILIZERS ARE NOT PESTICIDES.**

### What training do I need?

You must be trained before working in fields where pesticides have been used recently. You must be trained every five years after that.

### What does my training cover?

You must be told about:

#### 1. Health effects

- How pesticides can injure you or make you sick.
- How you may feel or look if you get pesticides in or on you.
- Ways pesticides can enter your body.

#### 2. Pesticide safety

- The places at your work where you might get pesticides in or on you.
- First aid information and where to get emergency medical care.
- Job safety information.



- Why you should wash after work.
- Why you should not take pesticides home.
- What posting signs and restricted entry intervals mean.
- Your rights as an employee.

If you mix or apply pesticides, you must have more training on how to do that job safely (See the A-8 safety leaflet for more information about safety rules for pesticide handlers on farms).

## How can I protect myself from pesticides?

Pesticide labels tell you how to protect yourself. Labels tell you the hazards of the pesticide, when to wear certain kinds of protection (such as gloves or pants with a long-sleeved shirt), and why there is a time after a pesticide application when you cannot go back into a field, called a restricted entry interval (REI). **BE SAFE**, wash your hands before eating, smoking or going to the bathroom. Take a bath or shower and use soap after working in fields to wash off any pesticides or plant juices you might have on you, your clothes, or your shoes.



## What does “Restricted Entry Interval” (REI) mean?

An REI is the time after a pesticide has been applied when you are not allowed to go into a field. If you touch a plant during its REI, you might become sick. After a pesticide is used on a plant it will begin to go away. But this takes time and may take longer for some pesticides than for others.

If you go into or near a sprayed field or greenhouse, the farmer or your employer must tell you:

1. About the pesticide(s) used.
2. What you must do to protect yourself.
3. How long to stay out of the field (the REI).

Follow the directions about staying out of sprayed fields and greenhouses. If you see a sign like this, it means stay out of the field!



## Can I ever go into a field with an REI in effect?

Usually you must not go into a field until the REI is over. But, sometimes there are times when you can. You may go into a field during the REI if you are doing a job where you will not touch anything that could have pesticides on it. For example, if you are driving a tractor.

There are a few other times when you can go into a field during an REI. However, you cannot go into the field until at least **four hours** after the pesticide application. There may also be other rules that apply. Your employer must know these rules and tell you about them before you go into the field. He must also tell you how long you can work in that field in one day. For some kinds of jobs, you may only be allowed to work in that field for a short period of time.



## What do I need to know if I have to go into a field during the REI?

### Your employer must tell you:

1. The name of the pesticide sprayed and how long the REI is.
2. What special protective clothes or equipment (PPE) you must wear.
3. Ways the pesticide can make you sick.
4. How you may feel or look if you get pesticides in or on you.
5. What emergency first aid steps to take if a pesticide makes you sick.
6. How to keep from getting sick from being too hot while using any PPE
7. How you may feel or look if you get sick from being too hot and what first aid steps to take.
8. Why you need to wash after you leave the field where pesticides have been used.

Your employer must give you all the PPE you need to wear during the REI. They must give you soap, water, and towels for you to wash up with after you take off your PPE.

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## What should I do if I start feeling sick at work?

Pesticides can make you sick. Symptoms of pesticide poisoning can be the same as having the flu or other common illnesses. If you get a headache, dizziness, upset stomach, blurred vision, flu-like symptoms, a rash, or eye pain while working in the field, ask your employer to take you to the doctor. A pesticide might cause these symptoms. You can also get skin rashes from plants and insects in the field.

Your employer must plan for medical care before you start working where pesticides have been used. **If you think that pesticides made you sick or hurt you at work, your employer must make sure that you are taken to the doctor immediately.** Do not drive yourself to the doctor if you get sick at work. You do not have to pay for medical care if you get sick or hurt from pesticides at work.

### Emergency medical care is available at:

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(Space for listing where care facilities are)

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## What are my rights?

You have the right to know about pesticides that have been used recently where you work. The farmer must keep records on:

- When and where the pesticide was applied.



- The restricted entry interval (REI).
- Name of the pesticide and active ingredient(s).
- The U. S. EPA registration number.

As part of your training, your employer must tell you where this information is kept. They must also let you see the records anytime you want without having to ask.

You can find information about recent pesticide use at (employers, this is the application-specific information):

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You have the right to report unsafe work conditions without being punished or fired. Neither the farmer nor your employer will be told who made the complaint. Your statements about the safety problems must be checked out right away.

Pesticides are only one kind of danger at your work. If you have a complaint about a pesticide safety problem, you should call your County Agricultural Commissioner. You can look up the Commissioner's number in the government pages of your local phone book, or by calling DPR's toll-free complaint information line, 1-87PestLine (1-877-378-5463). Other health and safety complaints (bathrooms, heat stress, drinking water, etc.) should be filed with the California Department of Industrial Relations Cal/OSHA office.

If you get sick or hurt **BECAUSE OF YOUR JOB**, you have the right to file for worker's compensation. Workers' compensation will pay for your medical bills, and sometimes, lost pay.

You have the right to look at Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and records for all pesticides used where you work. The SDS tells you about the pesticide and its dangers.

**These records are kept at:**

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Your employer must explain your rights to you. If you need more help understanding your rights, go to your local county agricultural commissioner's office, local legal aid, worker's rights office, your union or the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR)

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## Proposition 65

In 1986, a law called the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Proposition 65) was passed. Proposition 65 requires California to make a list of chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm. The Proposition 65 list contains many different chemicals, including dyes, solvents, pesticides, drugs, and food additives. Your employer may also choose to warn you if a pesticide on the Proposition 65 list has been sprayed, even if health problems are not likely. Your employer is required to keep information on each pesticide application and allow you to look at it. If you are not sure of the record location, ask your employer.

**The list of pesticides that are on the Proposition 65 list and that might be used in California, can be found at <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/factshts/prop65.htm>.**

**DOWNLOAD** current Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to the State to cause cancer or reproductive toxicity:  
[http://www.oehha.ca.gov/prop65/prop65\\_list/Newlist.html](http://www.oehha.ca.gov/prop65/prop65_list/Newlist.html)

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*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.cdpr.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



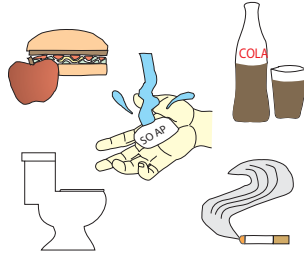
**1-877-378-5463**

# Safety Tips

## HOW TO PROTECT YOUR SKIN



- Wear clothes with long sleeves and long pants, shoes or boots, socks, a hat and/or scarf and gloves
- Make sure they are clean and without holes



- Always wash your hands before eating, drinking, smoking, chewing gum or going to the bathroom
- Do not cook food with wood found in the field



- Pesticides get on work clothes and then on your skin
- Wash work clothes before wearing them again
- Wash work clothes separate from other clothes



- Take a bath or shower as soon as you get home from work
- Wash with soap & water and use shampoo on your hair
- Put on clean clothes

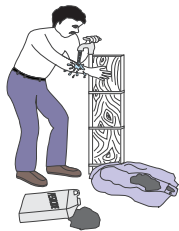
## WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF ILLNESS OR INJURY



- Pesticides get on your skin and clothes when you touch sprayed plants, soil, and irrigation water or are exposed to spray drift
- They can move from your clothes and onto your skin
- Some pesticides easily go through your skin and can make you sick
- Tell your employer if you are sick or hurt at work
- If the illness/injury is work-related, your employer will pay for all medical care of that illness
- If the condition is work-related, you may be paid for your time off work while sick or hurt

**Have someone else drive you to the doctor if you are sick or injured**

## FIRST AID



- Wash immediately with the closest clean water if pesticides are spilled or sprayed on your clothes or skin
- Change into clean clothes
- Tell your employer about the spill after washing



- Wash if your eyes or skin begin to itch or burn
- Use lots of water
- Tell your employer you should go to a doctor



- If you feel sick at work (headache, stomach ache, vomiting, dizzy) tell your employer
- He or she can make sure you are taken to a doctor
- Have someone else drive you to the doctor if you are sick or injured

## ALWAYS REMEMBER



- Never put pesticides in food containers
- Do not take farm pesticides or their containers home
- Keep children away from pesticides