

PESTICIDE SAFETY



Information

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

A No. 6

Safety Rules for Minimal Exposure Pesticides (MEPs) in Agricultural Settings

Some pesticides are called “Minimal Exposure Pesticides,” or **MEPs**, because it is important to make sure you are exposed to them as little as possible. MEPs can hurt you in ways you might not notice right away. If you are exposed to them, they could be doing damage in your body and causing problems you might not notice until much later.

THESE ARE THE THREE MEPS YOU MIGHT USE IN YOUR JOB:

1. Bromoxynil (Example: Moxy, Maestro, Cleansweep)

- **USE:** Controls broadleaf weeds in grain crops, corn, cotton, sorghum, flax, alfalfa seedlings, rangeland, mint, garlic, onions, sod, and non-crop sites.
- **DANGER:** If you are a pregnant woman and exposed to even a little of these pesticides, it might hurt you and/or your unborn child.

2. Oxydemeton-methyl (No registered products)

- **USE:** Controls insects and mites.
- **DANGER:** These pesticides can affect your nervous system. If you are exposed to too much of them you might start vomiting, get a headache, feel sick to your stomach, or your vision might blur. If you are a man and are exposed to even a little of these pesticides, it might hurt your ability to have children.

3. Propargite (Example: Omite, Decimite, Comite)

- **USE:** Controls mites on cotton, corn, garlic, grapes, strawberries, onions, stone fruits, and other crops.
- **DANGER:** If you are exposed to too much of these pesticides, your skin and eyes might start hurting, you might start coughing, or your throat might feel sore. If you are a pregnant woman and exposed to even a little of this pesticide, it might hurt you and/or your unborn child. These pesticides might cause cancer if you are exposed to them for a long time.



WHAT MUST MY EMPLOYER DO TO PROTECT ME WHEN I USE THESE PESTICIDES?

If you handle MEPs, **your employer** must give you the following personal protective equipment (PPE):

- Coveralls (or a long-sleeved shirt and long pants).
- Chemical-resistant clothes that cover your body, head, arms, and legs, except when:
 - o You use a closed mixing system or water-soluble package to mix, load, or transfer the pesticide,
 - o You use an enclosed cab when applying the pesticide,
 - o You use equipment to inject or incorporate the pesticide into the soil, or
 - o Spray nozzles are directed downward and are located below you.
- Chemical-resistant gloves and boots.
- Eye protection, with some exceptions.
- The right kind of respirator (See the table at the end of this leaflet). Ask your employer for the A-5 safety leaflet for more information on respirators. You must wear a respirator:
 - o When you mix or load dry MEPs (such as a dust or powder) unless the pesticide is in a water-soluble package.
 - o When you apply MEPs by hand or ground equipment, with some exceptions.

If you meet one of the exceptions, your employer must still have the required PPE present and available in case of an emergency. Your employer must make sure that all PPE is cleaned well or thrown away at the end of each work day. Ask your employer for a copy of the A-3 safety leaflet for more information about these exceptions.

Additionally, your employer must provide:

- Enough water, soap, and single use towels for normal washing and in case of an emergency where you mix and load the pesticides.
- A place with enough water, soap, and clean towels where you can change your clothes and wash at the end of your work day.
- A clean, pesticide-free place to store your own clothes while you work with these pesticides.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL RULES I SHOULD KNOW?

- You cannot use these pesticides in a greenhouse.
- If you use a closed mixing system, water-soluble packaging, or an enclosed cab, you may not have to wear PPE required by the label or other rules. Ask your employer for a copy of the A-3 safety leaflet for more information about the equipment and the other types of PPE you can wear.



- You and your employer should first read the label to determine what respirator to wear. If the label doesn't tell you, use the following table:

MINIMAL EXPOSURE PESTICIDE RESPIRATOR REQUIREMENTS	
Pesticide Product Examples	Minimum Required Respirator
Moxy, Maestro, Cleansweep	Particulate filter (N-, R- or P-rated). Use R- or P-rated only if there is oil in the pesticide mix
Oxydemeton-methyl (no registered products)	Organic vapor cartridge with R- or P-rated particulate filter
Omite, Decimite, Comite	Organic vapor cartridge with N-, R-, or P-rated particulate filter. Use R- or P-rated only if there is oil in the pesticide mix



If you don't get all the information you need in your training or want to make a pesticide use complaint, you should call your County Agricultural Commissioner, or the DPR for more information. You can find the Commissioner's number in your local white pages phone directory, by calling 1-87PestLine, or at: www.cdpr.ca.gov/exec/county/countymap

DPR's Regional Offices are:

- Northern (Sacramento) (916) 603-7700
- Central (Clovis) (559) 297-3511
- Southern (Anaheim) (714) 279-7690



All safety leaflets are available at: www.cdpr.ca.gov/worker-health-and-safety/education-series