

# PESTICIDE SAFETY



Information

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

**A No. 9**

## Pesticide Safety Rules for Employees Working in Fields

**Your training and this leaflet tell you about pesticide dangers at work.** Pesticides are chemicals that are used to control unwanted insects, weeds, and plant diseases. If you work on a farm, or in a forest, greenhouse, or nursery, your employer must know about the pesticides used and help you learn how to protect yourself.

### FERTILIZERS ARE NOT PESTICIDES.

### EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

Your employer must plan for medical care before you start working where pesticides have been used. You or your supervisor must be informed of the location of the doctor. If you think that pesticides made you sick or hurt you at work, immediately tell your employer. They must make sure that you are taken to the doctor immediately. Do not drive yourself to the doctor if you get sick at work.

**Emergency medical care is available at:**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

If more space is needed, your employer may attach a list of medical facilities to this leaflet and write "See attached list" in the above space.

**REMEMBER:** You DO NOT have to pay for medical care if you get sick or hurt from pesticides at work.

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**EMPLOYERS:** This is the hazard communication leaflet for your fieldworkers. Fill in the blank lines in this leaflet and display a copy of this leaflet at the employee's worksite, all permanent decontamination facilities, and decontamination facilities serving 11 or more workers. If requested, you must read this leaflet to an employee in a language the employee understands.

## 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 being stressed or ill from heat, having the flu, or other common illnesses. If you get a headache, dizziness, coughing, eye pain, blurred vision, burning eyes, an upset stomach, flu-like symptoms, or a rash while working in the field, ask your employer to take you to the doctor. You can also get skin rashes from plants and insects in the field.

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## WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

Your employer must explain your rights to you. If you need help understanding your rights, call or go to your local County Agricultural Commissioner's office, local legal aid and worker's rights organization, union, or the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR).

### 1. Right to Know

You have the right to know the following about pesticides that have been used recently where you work:

- The crop or site treated.
- Where the pesticide was applied.
- When the application started and ended.
- The restricted entry interval (REI).
- Name of the pesticide, active ingredient(s), and U.S. EPA or California registration number.
- The Safety Data Sheet for the applied pesticide.

Your employer must tell you where this information is kept, and must tell you if the location of this information changes. For recent applications, your employer must let you see the records anytime you want without having to ask anyone. You may have to ask to see older records.

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

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

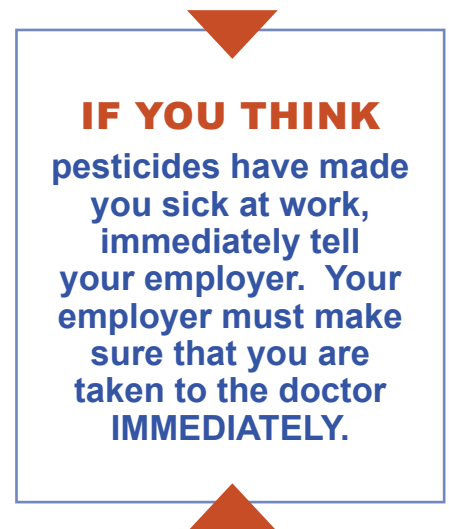
HOW TO FIND THE INFORMATION: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If more space is needed, your employer may attach a list of grower names, addresses, and descriptions to this leaflet and write "See attached list" in the above space.

### 2. Right to Worker's Compensation

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



### 3. Right to Access and Review Training Records

You have the right to look at your safety training records from your employer. These records are kept at:

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Right to Obtain Information

You, your doctor, or your representative designated in writing can receive information from the grower or your employer. This includes which pesticides the fields were treated with or any other pesticide record the grower or your employer has to keep.

### 5. Right to Report Unsafe Conditions

Pesticide safety for workers is the top priority of the County Agricultural Commissioner and DPR. You have the right to report unsafe pesticide work conditions and suspected pesticide use violations without being punished or fired. Neither the grower nor your employer will be told who made the complaint. Your statements about the safety problems must be checked out right away.

### 6. Right to Be Protected From Retaliation

You are protected from being fired, from discrimination, and from any retaliatory action due to the exercise of any of your rights.

## WHO DO I TELL ABOUT DANGERS AT WORK?

Pesticides are only one kind of danger at your work. If you have a complaint about pesticide safety, call your County Agricultural Commissioner. Your local County Agricultural Commissioner's office is:

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have other health and safety complaints (bathrooms, heat stress, drinking water, etc.), file them with the California Department of Industrial Relations Cal/OSHA office by calling: 1-844-522-6734.

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM PESTICIDES?

Learn all you can from this leaflet and your safety training. **BE SAFE.** Know where you may be exposed to pesticides. If your employer tells you to stay out of a field, do not go in it. Stay away from equipment that is applying pesticides. After working in a field, wash your hands before eating, drinking, chewing gum, using your phone, smoking,



or going to the bathroom. At the end of the day, remove your boots or shoes before entering your home and removing your work clothes. Wash your body and hair with soap or shampoo right after work, and change into clean clothes as soon as possible. Wash your work clothes before wearing them again.

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## **WHEN I WORK IN A FIELD, WHAT MUST MY EMPLOYER GIVE ME TO WASH UP?**

When you work in a field that has been treated with pesticides, there must be a place nearby with soap, clean water, and paper towels. This is for washing your hands and face, and for emergency eye flushing. You must be told where these items are before you work in the field. If pesticides are spilled or sprayed on you, use these supplies to wash immediately, and inform your employer.

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## **WHEN DO I NEED TRAINING AND WHAT DOES IT COVER?**

You must be trained before working in fields where pesticides have been used recently, and every year after that. The pesticide safety training must be in a language you understand, and be done by a qualified trainer. You must be trained at a location free of distractions and your trainer must be with you the entire time you are being trained. Your employer must make your training record available to you anytime you ask for it.

Your employer must train you about:

### **1. Health Effects**

- How pesticides can injure you or make you or your family sick.
- How to protect yourself and your family (especially children and pregnant women) from pesticides.
- How you may feel or look if you get pesticides in or on you.
- Ways pesticides can enter your body.
- How you may feel or look if you get sick from being too hot and what first aid steps to take.

### **2. Pesticide Safety**

- The places at your work where you might get pesticides in or on you.
- First aid and emergency washing methods, including eye wash.
- How, when, and where to get emergency medical care.
- What work clothes to wear and how to wash your work clothes.
- Why and how you should wash after work.
- Why you should not take pesticides home from work.
- What field posting signs and restricted entry intervals mean.
- That your employer must keep you out of application exclusion zones.
- What your employer must give you before you enter a field during a restricted entry interval.



- Where filled out copies of this leaflet are displayed and where other pesticide records are kept.
- What is in a Safety Data Sheet, including hazards, medical care, and other information.
- How to report suspected pesticide violations.
- Your rights as an employee.

The information about your training must be written down. You will be given a paper to sign to show you have been trained. Only sign this form after you have finished the training and you understand what you heard.

You cannot be told to mix, load, or apply pesticides unless you have been trained by your employer to do that job safely (the A-8 safety leaflet has more information about safely handling pesticides).

## WHAT WILL I BE TOLD ABOUT NEARBY PESTICIDE APPLICATIONS?

Your employer must tell you about nearby applications on the property OR the grower must post warning signs in fields that are being treated with pesticides. When there is a nearby application being made to the property you are on, your employer must tell you:

BEFORE APPLICATION	AFTER APPLICATION
Date of application	Location and description of the treated area
Location and description of the treated area	Dates and times when entry is restricted
Not to enter the field and the application exclusion zone	To stay out of the field until entry is no longer restricted

This must be in a language you understand. Follow directions from your employer about staying out of treated fields and enclosed spaces like greenhouses, hoop houses, or mushroom houses.

## WHAT DOES “RESTRICTED ENTRY INTERVAL” (REI) MEAN?

A 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 in a treated field during the REI, you might become sick. After a pesticide is used on a plant, it will begin to go away. But this takes time, so you must stay out of the treated field or enclosed space until the REI ends and your employer or the grower tells you it is safe to work in the field or enclosed space.

**WASH WORK CLOTHES**  
separate from other laundry.

**DANGER**



**KEEP OUT  
NO ENTRE**

GROWER: \_\_\_\_\_

FIELD IDENTIFICATION: \_\_\_\_\_

REI EXPIRATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

*If you see a sign like this, it means stay out!*



## CAN I EVER GO INTO A FIELD WITH A REI IN EFFECT?

Usually, you must stay out of a field until the REI ends and your employer or the grower tells you that you can enter the field. Never walk or sit in a field that has been sprayed with pesticides. Your employer will try to schedule pesticide applications and your work so you will not go into sprayed fields. Normally, you cannot be told to enter a field or enclosed space if warning signs are posted

There are a few times when you can go into a field or enclosed space during the REI. However, you cannot go into the field until at least **four hours** after the pesticide application. You must be at least 18 years old to enter a field during the REI. There may also be other rules that apply. Before you go into the field each time, your employer must provide you with extra training and protective clothing or equipment. They 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 each time:

1. Where you will be working.
2. The name of the pesticide sprayed and when the REI began and when it will end.
3. If there are special restrictions on your tasks, such as if you can touch treated surfaces and how much time you can be in the area.
4. What the label says are dangers to you.
5. How you may feel or look if you get pesticides in or on you.
6. What emergency first aid steps to take if a pesticide makes you sick and how to get help right away.
7. Where to find this leaflet and the A-8 safety leaflet.
8. The protective clothes or equipment you must wear, and that once worn, your work clothes and protective clothes or equipment may be contaminated with pesticides.
9. How to keep from getting sick from being too hot if you use protective clothing or equipment and to know what first aid steps to take if you do get sick.
10. How to wear, remove, store, and clean the protective clothes and equipment.
11. Why you need to thoroughly wash after you leave the field.



Your employer must give you all the clean protective clothing or equipment you need. If the label requires you to protect your eyes, you need to carry eyewash while you are working. You must be given a clean, pesticide-free place to store your personal clothing, and to put on or take off protective clothing or equipment. You must also be given extra coveralls in case you get pesticide on your clothes. Your employer must give you soap, clean water, and towels for you to wash up.

## PROPOSITION 65

In 1986, a law called the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Proposition 65) was passed. It requires California to make a list of chemicals that can cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm. The Proposition 65 list contains many different chemicals, including dyes, solvents, pesticides, drugs, and food additives. If a pesticide you use is on the Proposition 65 list, your employer must warn you if you could be exposed to enough pesticide to cause a significant health risk. Your employer may also choose to tell you if a pesticide on the Proposition 65 list has been sprayed, even if health problems are not likely. As stated above, your employer must keep information on each pesticide application at the address listed on page 2 and allow you to look at it. If you are not sure of this location, ask your employer.

**You can find the list of pesticides that are on the Proposition 65 list and that might be used in California at [https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/prop\\_65\\_list.pdf](https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/prop_65_list.pdf)**

For more information on Prop 65, see [https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/pesticides\\_and\\_proposition\\_65.pdf](https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/pesticides_and_proposition_65.pdf)



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](http://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



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All safety leaflets are available at:  
[www.cdpr.ca.gov/worker-health-and-safety/education-series](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/worker-health-and-safety/education-series)

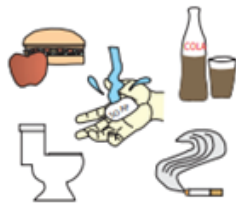
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# Safety Tips

## HOW TO PROTECT YOUR SKIN



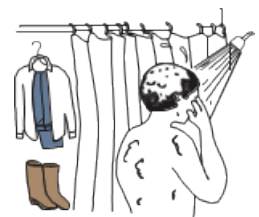
- Wear clothes with long sleeves and long pants, shoes or boots, socks, a hat and/or bandana, and gloves
- Make sure they are clean and without holes



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



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



- Wash or shower as soon as you get home from work and before any contact with children or family
- Wash with soap and water, and use shampoo on your hair
- Put on clean clothes

## WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF ILLNESS



- Pesticides can get on your skin and clothes when you touch treated plants, soil, irrigation water, tractors, and other equipment, on used personal protective equipment, or are exposed to spray drift
- They can move from your clothes and onto your skin
- Some pesticides can easily go through your skin and make you sick
- Tell your employer immediately if you are sick (headache, stomach ache, vomiting, dizzy) or hurt at work
- He or she must make sure you are taken to a doctor

**Have someone else drive you to the doctor if you are sick or injured. DO NOT DRIVE YOURSELF**

## 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

## ALWAYS REMEMBER



- Never put pesticides in food or drink containers
- Do not take farm pesticides or their containers home

## STAY SAFE!



- Keep children and family away from pesticides
- Follow directions about keeping out of treated areas and application exclusion zones