

PSEP Fact Sheet:

Agricultural Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides

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The EPA has issued regulations for the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) for agricultural pesticides. The regulations expand the requirements for warnings about agricultural pesticide applications, use of personal protective equipment, and restrictions on entry to treated areas and add provisions for decontamination, emergency assistance, maintaining contact with handlers of highly toxic agricultural pesticides, and agricultural pesticide safety training.

Agricultural pesticide registrants are required to include appropriate labeling statements referencing these regulations and specifying application restrictions, restricted-entry intervals (REIs), personal protective equipment (PPE), and notification to workers about agricultural pesticide applications.

The WPS is directed toward the working conditions of two types of employees:

- agricultural pesticide handlers — those who handle agricultural pesticides or application equipment (mix, load, apply, clean, repair, flag, etc.) and
- agricultural workers — those who perform tasks related to the cultivation and harvesting of plants on farms or in greenhouses, nurseries, or forests.

There are three types of provisions intended to:

1. eliminate or reduce agricultural pesticide exposures,
2. mitigate exposures that occur, and
3. inform employees about the hazards of agricultural pesticides.

1. Eliminate or reduce agricultural pesticide exposures. This rule limits agricultural pesticide exposures by REIs for all agricultural pesticide products that are used in the production of agricultural plants. The REI is the period of time after the application of an agricultural pesticide during which worker entry into a treated area is restricted. Early entry requires the use of label-specified PPE.

- **48-hour REIs** are established for any agricultural product that is highly toxic because of dermal toxicity or skin or eye irritation. (The REI is extended to 72 hours in arid areas for agricultural organophosphate insecticides applied outdoors.)
- **24-hour REIs** are established for any agricultural product that is moderately toxic because of dermal toxicity or skin or eye irritation.
- **12-hour REIs** are established for any agricultural product that is slightly toxic because of dermal toxicity or skin or eye irritation.
- **4-hour REIs** are established for any low-risk agricultural products.



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- **Previously established REIs** will be retained if they are longer than the REI established by these rules.

Overall exposure to agricultural pesticides is reduced in this rule by:

- prohibiting agricultural pesticide application in a manner that will expose workers or others,
- excluding workers from areas being treated with agricultural pesticides,
- excluding workers from areas that remain under an REI with narrow exceptions,
- protecting early-entry workers who are performing permitted activities in treated areas during an REI including special instructions and duties related to correct use of PPE,
- notifying workers about treated areas so they can avoid inadvertent exposures, and
- protecting handlers during handling activities including monitoring while handling highly toxic agricultural pesticides and duties related to correct use of PPE.

2. Mitigate exposures that occur

- Decontamination procedures require providing handlers and workers an ample supply of water, soap, and towels for routine washing and emergency decontamination.
- Emergency procedures require making transportation available to a medical care facility if an agricultural worker or handler may have been poisoned or injured by an agricultural pesticide and providing information about the agricultural pesticide(s) to which a worker or handler may have been exposed.

3. Inform employees about the hazards of agricultural pesticides

- Agricultural pesticide safety training requires training for workers and handlers.
- Agricultural pesticide safety training requires the posting of an agricultural pesticide safety poster.
- Access to labeling information requires that agricultural pesticide handlers and early-entry workers are informed about agricultural pesticide label safety information.
- Access to specific information requires a centrally located listing of agricultural pesticide applications at the establishment.

Implementation

WPS requirements on agricultural pesticide labels include:

1. using label-specified PPE,
2. obeying label-specified requirements to provide oral warnings and to post-treated areas,
3. obeying label-specified restrictions on entry to treated areas during REIs,
4. providing training of workers and handlers,
5. providing certain notification and information,
6. providing decontamination supplies, and
7. providing emergency assistance.

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