

Agrichemicals

WPS – Eyeflush Requirements



Ag Center

Helping Agriculture Comply with
Environmental Requirements

F O C U S O N

Eyeflush Requirements

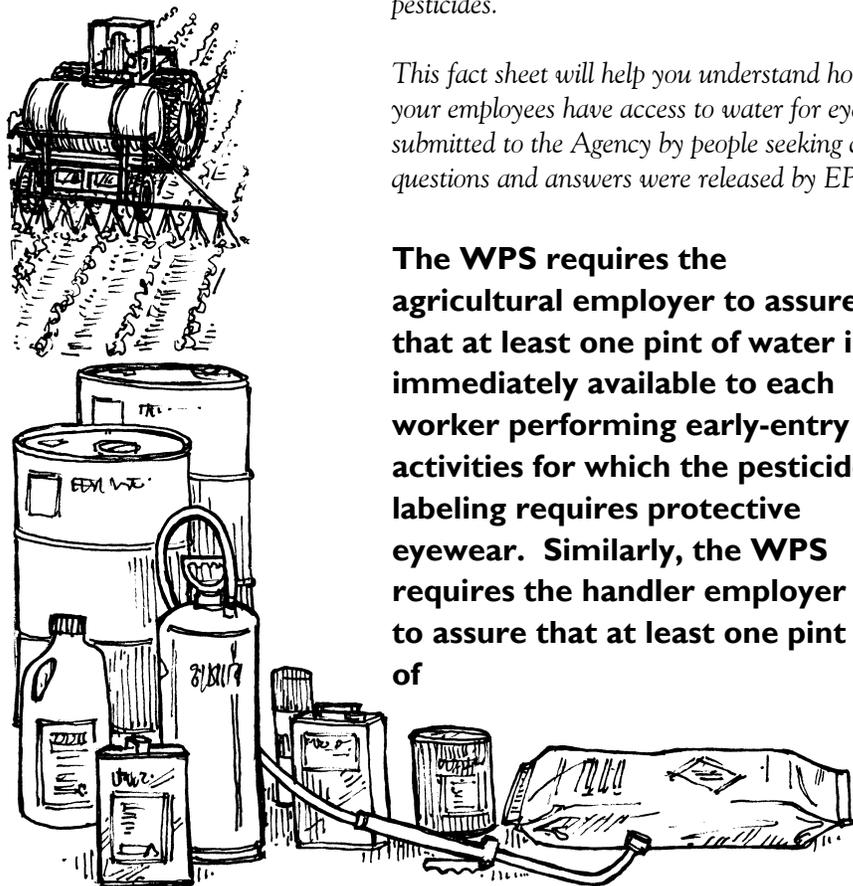
The Agricultural Worker Protection Standard (WPS) is a regulation issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1992 and amended in 1995. It covers pesticides that are used in the production of agricultural plants on farms, forests, nurseries, and greenhouses. The WPS requires you to take steps to reduce the risk of pesticide-related illness and injury if you (1) use such pesticides, or (2) employ workers or pesticide handlers who are exposed to such pesticides.

This fact sheet will help you understand how to comply with WPS requirements for ensuring that your employees have access to water for eyeflushing. The questions answered here were submitted to the Agency by people seeking clarification on this part of the regulation. The questions and answers were released by EPA's Office of Compliance on March 15, 1995.

The WPS requires the agricultural employer to assure that at least one pint of water is immediately available to each worker performing early-entry activities for which the pesticide labeling requires protective eyewear. Similarly, the WPS requires the handler employer to assure that at least one pint of

water is immediately available to each handler who is performing tasks for which the pesticide labeling requires protective eyewear. What is meant by "immediately available"?

In both sections of the WPS addressing availability of eyeflush water, the Agency requires that emergency eyeflush water be carried by the handler or early-entry worker, or be on the vehicle (or aircraft) which the handler or early-entry worker is using, or be otherwise immediately accessible. [40 CFR §§ 170.150(b)(4) and 170.250(d)].





When is eyeflush water “immediately accessible”?

The WPS *How To Comply* manual states that emergency eyeflush water may be at the decontamination site if the decontamination site is immediately accessible. Because the WPS specifies that eyewash water must be carried by the handler or early-entry worker, or must be on the vehicle or aircraft that the handler or early-entry worker is using, the eyewash water must be close and accessible to the worker or handler at all times. In addition, because concentrations and causticity of agricultural chemicals vary so greatly (and therefore the duration of exposure necessary for ocular damage to occur is difficult to uniformly determine), emergency eyewash water must be available immediately. If the emergency eyewash water is not being carried on one's person, it must be situated at such a distance that one could get to it within very few seconds.

If emergency eyeflush water must be close, accessible, and situated so that one could get to it within very few seconds, what are some examples of places that it may be located/stored so that the above criteria are met?

In addition to the examples listed above, the following might be additional examples of "immediately available":

1. Running water, a commercial eyeflush dispenser, or decontamination water in a carboy at a mix/load, storage, equipment cleaning or repairing, or other stationary handling (or early-entry) site for handlers or early entry workers engaged in such activities at the site.
2. Running water or commercial eyeflush dispensers that are located at frequent intervals and are easily accessed by the handlers/early-entry workers in a bench-type nursery or greenhouse site.
3. Water that meets the WPS standard for decontamination water that is in a nurse tank or other supply tank that is on (or being dragged by) the vehicle a handler or early-entry worker is operating.

What are some examples of unacceptable locations in which to store emergency eyeflush water (i.e., water would NOT be immediately available)?

Examples of situations where emergency eyeflush water would NOT be immediately accessible are:

1. Water on a vehicle but in a locked compartment.

2. Water for which difficult or time-consuming steps must be taken to access, such as having to uncouple or connect a nurse tank hose, having to unlock a compartment holding the eyeflush dispenser, or having to unlock a restroom.
3. Water located across a stream or commercial road.

Does the eyeflush water requirement in the WPS need to be in one pint containers only? Can a single, large container suffice if the contents equal or exceed one pint per worker?

A single large container would suffice if it were immediately accessible to each worker or handler who requires it. [40 CFR § 170.150]

For more information

You can get more facts about compliance by calling the Ag Center's toll-free number. Materials can be sent to you by fax or mail, or you can talk to an Ag Center representative. For a list of all publications available from the Ag Center, request document number 10001, "Ag Center Publications."

The Ag Center welcomes comments on this document and its other services.

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