

# Agrichemicals

## WPS – Pesticide Handler Definition



# Ag Center

Helping Agriculture Comply with  
Environmental Requirements

F O C U S O N

## Definition of Pesticide Handler

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.

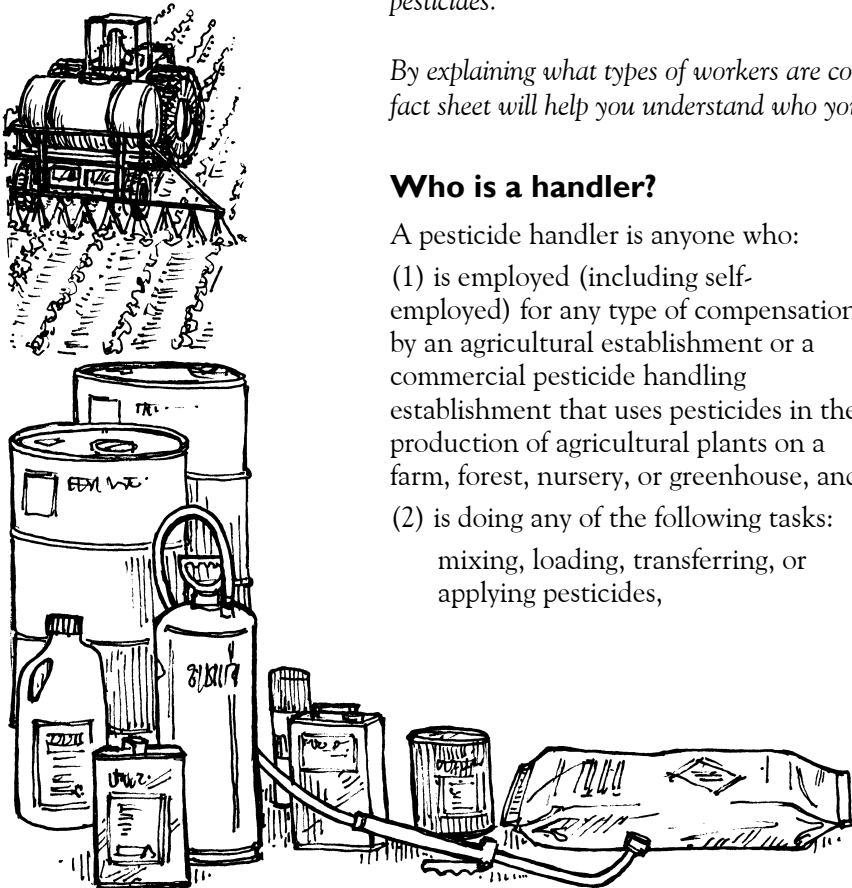
By explaining what types of workers are considered “pesticide handlers” under this regulation, this fact sheet will help you understand who you must legally provide protections for.

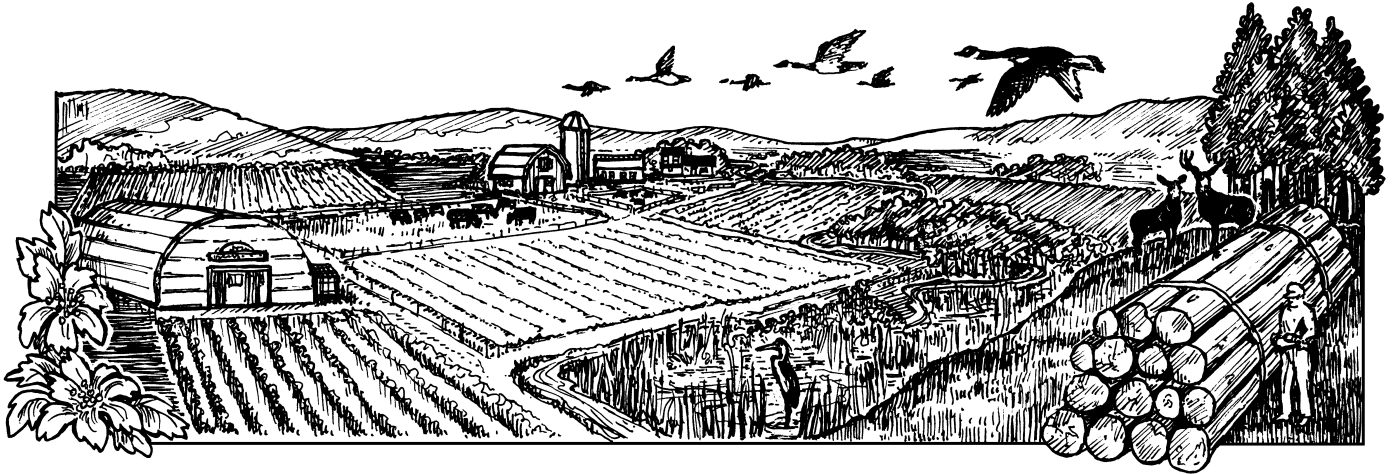
### Who is a handler?

A pesticide handler is anyone who:

- (1) is employed (including self-employed) for any type of compensation by an agricultural establishment or a commercial pesticide handling establishment that uses pesticides in the production of agricultural plants on a farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse, and
- (2) is doing any of the following tasks:
  - mixing, loading, transferring, or
  - applying pesticides,

handling opened containers of pesticides,  
acting as a flagger,  
cleaning, handling, adjusting, or repairing the parts of mixing, loading, or application equipment that may contain pesticide residues, assisting with the application of pesticides, including incorporating the pesticide into the soil after the application has occurred,





*Handling tasks include many more activities than just mixing, loading, and applying pesticides.*

entering a greenhouse or other enclosed area after application and before the inhalation exposure level listed on the product labeling has been reached or one of the WPS ventilation criteria has been met to:

- operate ventilation equipment,
- adjust or remove coverings, such as tarps, used in fumigation, or
- check air concentration levels,

entering a treated area outdoors after application of any soil fumigant to adjust or remove soil coverings, such as tarpaulins,

performing tasks as a crop advisor:

- during any pesticide application,
- before any inhalation exposure level or ventilation criteria listed in the labeling has been reached or one of the WPS ventilation criteria has been met,
- during any restricted-entry interval,

disposing of pesticides or pesticide containers.

### **Who is not a handler?**

A person is NOT a handler if he or she only handles pesticide containers that have been emptied or cleaned according to instructions on pesticide product labeling or, if the labeling has no such instructions, have been triple-rinsed or cleaned by an equivalent method, such as pressure rinsing.

A person is NOT a handler if he or she (1) is ONLY handling pesticide containers that are unopened AND (2) is NOT, at the same time, also doing any handling task (such as mixing or loading).

Examples:

You ARE a handler if you are loading unopened water-soluble packets into a mixing tank (because you are mixing and loading the pesticide).

You are NOT a handler if you:

- purchase pesticides and transport them unopened to an establishment.
- carry unopened containers into a pesticide storage facility.
- transport unopened containers to the site where they are to be mixed, loaded, or applied.

### **Certified applicators**

Handlers who are currently certified as applicators of restricted-use pesticides must be given all of the WPS handler protections, except that they need not receive WPS training.

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

### **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."

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