

# The Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides

## How Soon Do You Need to Comply?

You probably need to read this bulletin, if

- ◆ You own or manage a farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse where pesticides are used in the production of agricultural plants.
- ◆ You hire or contract for the services of agricultural workers to do tasks related to the production of agricultural plants on a farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse.
- ◆ You operate a business in which you (or people you employ) apply pesticides that are used for the production of agricultural plants on any farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse.
- ◆ You operate a business in which you (or people you employ) perform tasks as a crop advisor on any farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse.



This Bulletin explains when you need to comply with the new and expanded provisions of the EPA Worker Protection Standard (WPS).

The WPS will be phased into effect, to allow time for employers to learn about the changes and make plans to comply.

The EPA is preparing a complete manual on the WPS for agricultural employers: "The Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides -- How To Comply." The manual will be available in April 1993. Call the EPA Occupational Safety Branch for ordering information. (703) 305-7666.

## Revised Worker Protection Standard

In August 1992, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revised its Worker Protection Standard (WPS) for Agricultural Pesticides.

### Not All Provisions Take Effect Right Away

- ◆ You need not comply with many parts of the WPS until April 15, 1994. (Page 4.)
- ◆ You must comply with some parts of the revised WPS as soon as you use a pesticide that refers to the WPS in the Agricultural Use Requirements box on its label. (Page 3 and pages 5-8.)

Labels of agricultural pesticides will require compliance with the WPS. These labels will begin to appear after April 1993 as pesticide companies modify their labels to include WPS requirements. These labels will contain statements referring to the revised WPS.

### Expanded WPS Scope and Requirements

The revised WPS expands the scope of the regulation to include not only ◆ Workers performing hand labor operations in fields treated with pesticides but also ◆ Workers in forests, nurseries, and greenhouses and ◆ Employees who handle (mix, load, apply, etc.) pesticides for use in these locations.

The WPS extends requirements for ◆ Warnings about applications ◆ Use of personal protective equipment and ◆ Restrictions on entry to treated areas.

### New WPS Provisions

The revised Worker Protection Standard adds new provisions for ◆ Decontamination ◆ Emergency assistance ◆ Pesticide safety training ◆ Maintaining contact with handlers of highly toxic pesticides

♦ **Quick Reference Guide To WPS Requirements**  
♦ **April 21, 1993 - April 15, 1994**  
♦

This Quick Reference Guide does not include exceptions that may permit you to do less or options that may involve different requirements. These exceptions are described in pages 5-8 of this Bulletin. For more information, see the EPA manual "The Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides -- How To Comply."

Key words in the WPS have specific meanings. The definitions here are abbreviated. For complete definitions, see "The Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides -- How To Comply."

♦ This page presents the **maximum** Federal requirements for the parts of the 1992 Worker Protection Standard (WPS) that you must comply with between April 21, 1993, and April 15, 1994. These provisions are referred to as the WPS "accelerated provisions." On and after April 15, 1994, you must comply with ALL the 1992 WPS requirements.

♦ You will be in compliance with the accelerated provisions of the 1992 WPS if you make sure the requirements listed below are met. You must comply with all other directions and requirements specified on the pesticide labeling.

- ♦ ♦ **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Make sure all pesticide handlers wear the PPE required on the pesticide labeling for the handling task being performed. (Page 5)
- ♦ ♦ **Restricted-Entry Intervals (REIs):** During any REI, do not allow workers to enter a treated area. (Page 6)
- ♦ ♦ **Notice About Applications:** Orally warn workers and post treated areas if required on the pesticide labeling. (Page 5)
  - ♦ ♦ **Post warning signs** at entrances to treated areas.
  - ♦ ♦ **Orally warn workers** of ♦ location and description of treated area ♦ REI and ♦ not to enter during REI.

♦ **Key WPS Definitions**  
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♦ **Pesticide handlers**, in general, mix, load, apply, or do other tasks that bring them into direct contact with pesticides.

♦ **Restricted-entry interval** is the time after the end of a pesticide application during which entry into the treated area is limited.

♦ **Treated area** is any area to which a pesticide is being directed or has been directed.

♦ **Workers**, in general, do (1) hand labor tasks, such as weeding, planting, cultivating, and harvesting, or (2) other tasks involved in the production of agricultural plants, such as operating or moving irrigation equipment.

**WPS Requirements**  
**On And After April 15, 1994**

Many of the WPS provisions do not go into effect until **April 15, 1994**, to allow employers time to learn about the requirements and make arrangements to comply.

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- ♦ In general, the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) provisions that go into effect on **April 15, 1994**, include
- ♦ ♦ **Display of information at a central location**, including WPS safety poster, information about the location of emergency medical facilities, and a list of recent pesticide applications.
- ♦ ♦ **Pesticide safety training.**
- ♦ ♦ **Decontamination sites.**
- ♦ ♦ **Employer information exchange** between employers of agricultural workers (i.e., growers) and employers of commercial (for-hire) pesticide handlers.
- ♦ ♦ **Emergency assistance**, including transportation to medical care and information to medical personnel or your employees.
- ♦ ♦ **Notice of applications**, for products that allow a choice of warning workers orally or by posting treated areas.
- ♦ ♦ **Monitoring of handlers** who are using highly toxic pesticides.
- ♦ ♦ **Specific instructions for handlers**, including labeling information and safe operation of application equipment.
- ♦ ♦ **Equipment safety**, including inspection and maintenance.
- ♦ ♦ **Many duties related to personal protective equipment (PPE),\*** including providing, cleaning, and maintaining it, preventing heat illness, and allowing exceptions to PPE.
- ♦ ♦ **Many duties related to early entry**, including training and instruction, decontamination sites, and providing, cleaning, and maintaining personal protective equipment\*.
- ♦ ♦ **Special application restrictions in nurseries and greenhouses.**

\*However, prior to **April 15, 1994**, employers must assure that all labeling-required PPE is worn, even though they are not required to provide, clean, or maintain the PPE until **April 15, 1994**.

## WPS Accelerated Requirements: Detailed Information

### LABEL REQUIREMENTS

As soon as you use, in the production of agricultural plants, a pesticide with the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) reference statements on the pesticide label, you must comply with the following requirements, if they are listed on the pesticide label:

- ◆ Personal protective equipment (PPE).
- ◆ Double notification (a requirement on some labels to provide oral warnings to your workers **AND** post warning signs at entrances to treated areas).
- ◆ Restricted-entry intervals.

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS) allows some exceptions to these labeling-specified requirements. These exceptions and some further explanation of these "accelerated" provisions are described below. You must comply with all directions and requirements specified on the pesticide labeling.

### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

You must make sure the PPE the pesticide labeling requires for the task being done is worn by (1) all early-entry workers who contact treated surfaces, and (2) all pesticide handlers. This requirement applies to owners of agricultural establishments and members of their immediate family when they are performing these duties. Early entry may occur only under the narrow exceptions allowed by the WPS.

### DOUBLE NOTIFICATION

Some pesticide labels require you to notify workers **BOTH** orally **AND** with signs posted at entrances to the treated area. If both types of notification are required, the following

statement (or a similar statement) will be in the Agricultural Use Requirements box:

**"Notify workers of the application by warning them orally and by posting warning signs at entrances to treated areas."**

**Oral Warning:** You must tell your workers:

- ◆ The location and description of the treated area.
- ◆ The time during which entry is restricted.
- ◆ Not to enter the treated area until the restricted-entry interval has expired.

In general, you must make sure that each of your workers receives the oral warning. However, you do not need to give an oral warning to

- ◆ Any worker on the farm, forest, or nursery who will not be in the treated area, or walk within 1/4 mile of a treated area, during the pesticide application or while the restricted-entry interval is in effect.
- ◆ Any worker who will not be in the greenhouse during a pesticide application or while a restricted-entry interval is in effect there.
- ◆ Any worker who applied (or supervised the application of) the pesticide and is aware of all of the information required to be given in the oral warning.

**Treated Area Posting:** When the above statement appears on the labeling of the pesticide you are using, you must post usual points of worker entry to treated areas. However, you do not need to post treated areas if

- ◆ No workers on your farm, forest, or nursery will be in the treated area, or walk within 1/4 mile of the treated area, during the

## WPS Accelerated Requirements: Detailed Information



pesticide application or while the restricted-entry interval is in effect.

- ◆ No workers will be in the greenhouse during the pesticide application or while the restricted-entry interval is in effect there.
- ◆ The only workers for whom you need to post applied (or supervised the application of) the pesticide and are aware of all of the information required to be given in the oral warning.

While warnings are encouraged for all persons who may be exposed to pesticides, owners of farms, forests, nurseries, and greenhouses are NOT required to orally warn members of their immediate families. They also need not post entrances to treated areas if the only workers who may come close enough to the treated area to cause the posting to be required are members of their immediate family. For more information about the exemption for agricultural owners and their families, see "The Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides -- How To Comply."

Until April 15, 1994, you may use any sign that clearly tells workers to keep out of the treated area. By April 15, 1994, signs must be of the design and meet the criteria required by the WPS. Such signs should be available from the major agricultural sign producers.

### RESTRICTED-ENTRY INTERVALS

In general, you must keep workers out of a treated area during the restricted-entry interval (REI). The REI is the time after the end of a pesticide application during which entry into the treated area is limited. In general, REIs are

based on the toxicity of the product active ingredient.

Some pesticide labels require a long REI for arid areas. A label might say, for example: "72 hours in outdoor areas where average annual rainfall is less than 25 inches a year." You can get information on average annual rainfall for your area from any nearby weather bureau, such as one located at a local airport or one affiliated with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

In general, an REI has only two types of exceptions: (1) early entry with no contact and (2) early entry with contact for short-term, emergency, or specially excepted tasks. **No-contact early entry** -- After any inhalation exposure level listed on the product labeling has been reached or any WPS ventilation criteria have been met, you may permit workers into a treated area during an REI if they will **NOT touch or be touched by any pesticide residues**. (Note: Avoiding contact by using personal protective equipment does NOT qualify as "no contact.")

**Early entry with no contact:** You may permit workers into a treated area (after any inhalation exposure level or ventilation criteria has been met) during an REI if they will **NOT touch or be touched by any pesticide residues, including**

- ◆ On plants, including both agricultural plants and weeds.
- ◆ In soil or planting medium.
- ◆ In water, such as irrigation water or water standing in drainage ditches or puddles.
- ◆ In air, if pesticide remains suspended after application, such as after fumigation or after a smoke, mist, fog, or aerosol application.



