

Worker Protection Standard

The U.S. EPA issued the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) to protect employees on farms (and in forests, nurseries and greenhouses) from exposure to agricultural pesticides. The WPS requires employers to protect workers in areas treated with pesticides and employees who handle pesticides in the production of agricultural crops. The WPS went into full effect on January 1, 1995.

The WPS requires Category 1a businesses to do the following:

1. Inform their customers (i.e. farm operators) of the following:
 - a) Specific location on the farm where a treatment will be made
 - b) Scheduled time and date of the application. (If a pesticide application must be rescheduled, inform the farm operator of the new application time and date prior to making the application, or as soon as practical thereafter.)
 - c) Product name, the EPA registration number, and its active ingredient(s)
 - d) Restricted entry interval
 - e) Pesticide label requirements concerning special protection of workers and others during or after application (e.g., posting and verbal notification).
2. Make certain that no one- except persons appropriately trained and equipped as handlers (applicators, mixers, loaders, flaggers, equipment cleaners and repairmen and crop advisors) comes into contact with pesticides, either directly or through drift, during an application.

If a handler is using a pesticide that has a skull and crossbones symbol on the label, someone must check on the handler at least once every two hours. Contact may be by sight or by voice communication.
3. Provide handlers with product labels and ensure that the handler is aware of the following:
 - a) Signal word
 - b) Human hazard statements and precautions
 - c) Personal protective equipment requirements
 - d) First aid instructions
 - e) Environmental precautions
 - f) Additional precautions as necessary
4. Inspect and repair daily any equipment used for mixing, loading, transferring, or applying pesticides.

Clean pesticide residues from pesticide handling equipment before allowing anyone other than a trained handler to make repairs, adjustments, etc...
5. Equip handlers with and ensure proper use of the personal protective equipment (PPE) that the pesticide label requires for the tasks they perform. This includes requirements to:
 - a) Inspect all PPE, *each day of use*, for leaks, holes, tears, or worn places, and to repair or discard any damaged equipment;
 - b) Provide handlers with clean places, away from pesticide storage and use areas, for storing personal clothing not in use, for putting on PPE, and for removing PPE after completing handling tasks;
 - c) Take all necessary steps to prevent heat-related illness while PPE is in use;

- d) Prohibit handlers from wearing or taking home any pesticide contaminated PPE and
- e) Keep pesticide contaminated clothing away from other laundry. It must be washed separately.

The preceding section provides only an outline of the Worker Protection Standard. It does not completely address WPS. For additional detailed information commercial pesticide handler employers are encouraged to refer to US EPA's *How To Comply* by clicking [here](#) . Questions concerning WPS may be referred to Joe Becovitz at (765) 494-1589 or becovitzj@purdue.edu .