

AGRICULTURAL WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD (WPS)

COMPARISON OF THE REVISED PROTECTIONS TO THE PREVIOUS PROTECTIONS

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US EPA



This table summarizes key provisions in the EPA's previous WPS regulation and the 2015 revisions. It does not cover all of the details in the rule nor does it include all of the information needed to comply with the regulation.

| Requirement | Revised (2015) Provision | Previous Provision |
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| Training | | |
| Frequency of full training for workers and handlers | Annual training. | Every 5 years. |
| Training grace period for worker training | No grace period. Workers must be trained before they work in an area where a pesticide has been used or a restricted-entry interval has been in effect in the past 30 days. | 5-day grace period with abbreviated training. |
| Qualifications for trainers of workers | Certified applicators, State/Tribal/Federal approved trainers, and persons who have completed an EPA-approved train-the-trainer course. | Handlers, certified applicators, State/Tribal/Federal approved trainers, and persons completing an approved train-the-trainer course. |
| Expand training content for workers and handlers | Keep existing and expand content. Final worker training topics expanded to 23 items, and handler training expanded to 36 items. Training on new content not required until 2 years from effective date of final rule. | 11 basic training items for workers and 13 items for handlers. Minimal training on reducing take-home exposure, reporting use violations, and prohibition from employer retaliation. |
| Recordkeeping of training | Keep records for 2 years. Give copy of record of training to workers and handlers upon their request. | No recordkeeping of training. Voluntary verification card system. |
| Hazard Communication | | |
| Content and availability of hazard communications materials | Employer must display application information and safety data sheets (SDSs) at central location within 24 hours of end of application and before workers enter that treated area. Display both for 30 days after REI expires. Keep application information and SDS for 2 years from end of REI and make available to workers, handlers, designated representatives (identified in writing) or treating medical personnel upon request. | Employer must display application-specific information at a central location before application occurs, or, if no workers or handlers are on the establishment, before next period workers/handlers are on establishment. Keep posted for 30 days after REI expires. No recordkeeping. |

| Requirement | Revised (2015) Provision | Previous Provision |
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| Notification of Treated Areas | | |
| Notification of treated areas under an REI | Post warning sign if REI is greater than 48 hours (outdoor applications) or 4 hours (enclosed space applications (e.g., greenhouses)), otherwise option for posting or oral notification unless label requires both. | Farms, forests and nurseries: Post warning sign or give oral notification for any REI, unless label requires both. Greenhouses: all applications require signs to be posted. |
| Warning sign | Same as current sign. | Red circle containing stern-faced man with upraised hand. At the top: "DANGER" and "PELIGRO", "PESTICIDES", "PESTICIDAS". At the bottom: "KEEP OUT", "NO ENTRE." |
| Information exchange between handler employer and agricultural employer | Agricultural employer must provide application information on treated areas the handler may be in (or walk within ¼ mile of). Handler employer must notify before the application begins for certain changes and within 2 hours of end of application for most other changes, unless only change was less than 1 hour difference in application time. | Agricultural employer must provide application information on treated areas the handler may be in (or walk within ¼ mile of). Handler employer must notify of changes to application plans before application begins. |
| Minimum Age | | |
| Minimum age for handlers and early-entry workers | Handlers and early-entry workers must be at least 18 years old. (Members of owner's immediate family are exempt from this and most other requirements of the WPS.) | No minimum age. |
| Entry Restrictions During Application for Outdoor Production | | |
| Ag employers must prohibit entry in areas during application for outdoor production. (Restrictions for greenhouses/enclosed space production are different.) | All outdoor production: No entry into treated area or the application exclusion zone, which is an area up to 100 feet area around the application equipment during pesticide application on farms, forests and nurseries. Size of the application exclusion zone depends on type of application. Revised descriptions of application methods. | Farms and forests: No entry into treated area. Nurseries: No entry into treated area or an area up to 100 feet around the treated area, where the size of the additional area depends on type of application. |
| Handler Suspend Application | | |
| Handler (applicator) must suspend application in certain circumstances | Handler must apply pesticides so as not to contact workers or other persons. Handler must suspend application if a worker or other person is in the application exclusion zone, an area up to 100 feet around the application equipment. | Handler must apply pesticides so as not to contact workers or other persons. No specific requirement to suspend applications. |
| Exemptions and Exceptions | | |
| Exemption for certified crop advisors and their employees | Only certified crop advisors are exempt from labeling PPE and WPS requirements as specified in exemption. Certified crop advisor employees must use label-required PPE while working in a field during an REI, and employer must provide all required WPS protections, or rely on the PPE substitutions allowed under the crop advisors. | Certified crop advisor chooses PPE for themselves and their employees working under their direct supervision in a field during an REI. Also exempted from providing decontamination supplies and emergency assistance for themselves and employees. |
| Exceptions to REIs for early entry workers – notification requirements | Notify early-entry workers of application specifics, tasks to be performed, conditions of the early-entry exception, and hazard information from the pesticide label. | Inform early-entry workers of hazard information from the pesticide label. |

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| Basic Pesticide Safety Information | | |
| Display of pesticide safety information | Display pesticide safety information at a central location and at sites where decontamination supplies are located, if the decontamination supplies are at a permanent site or at a location with 11 or more workers or handlers. | Display a safety poster at central location. |
| Content of pesticide safety information | Information can be displayed in any format (doesn't have to be a poster); keep the 7 concepts about preventing pesticides from entering your body; delete the point that there are federal rules to protect workers and handlers; add instructions for employees to seek medical attention as soon as possible if they have been poisoned, injured or made ill by pesticides; add name, address and telephone number of state or tribal pesticide regulatory authority; revise "emergency medical facility" to " <u>a nearby</u> operating medical care facility." New content for safety information display not required until 2 years from effective date of final rule. | The safety poster must include 7 concepts about preventing pesticides from entering your body; the point that there are federal rules to protect workers and handlers; and the name, address and phone number of the nearest emergency medical care facility. |
| Personal Protective Equipment | | |
| Respirators | Employer must provide respirator and fit testing, training, and medical evaluation that conforms to OSHA standards for any handler required to wear any respirator by the labeling. Require recordkeeping of completion of fit test, training, and medical evaluation. | Employer must provide respirator listed on label and ensure it fits. No recordkeeping required. |
| Definition of chemical-resistant | Same as current definition. | Made of a material that allows no measurable movement of the pesticide through the material during use. |
| PPE exception for closed systems | Exceptions to the labeling-specified PPE allowed for handlers when using closed systems. A closed system must meet a broad performance-based standard and basic operating standards (written operating instructions and training of handlers in use of the system) must be provided. | Exceptions to the labeling-specified PPE allowed for handlers when using closed systems. No specific criteria for closed systems. |
| PPE exception for crop advisors and their employees | Crop advisors and their employees entering treated areas while a REI is in effect to conduct crop-advisor tasks may wear a standard set of PPE (coveralls, shoes plus socks and chemical-resistant gloves made of any waterproof material, and eye protection if the labeling of the pesticide product applied requires protective eyewear for handlers, as outlined in rule), <i>OR</i> the PPE specified on the pesticide labeling for early-entry activities instead of the PPE specified on the pesticide labeling for handling activities, provided certain conditions are met. (See exemption for certified crop advisor.) | Crop advisors and their employees entering treated areas while a REI is in effect to conduct crop-advisor tasks may wear the PPE specified on the pesticide labeling for early-entry activities instead of the PPE specified on the pesticide labeling for handling activities, provided certain conditions are met. (See exemption for certified crop advisor.) |
| PPE exception from eyewear for pilots in open cockpits | If product label requires eye protection, pilots in open cockpits may wear a helmet with lowered face shield instead of label-required eye protection. | If product label requires eye protection, pilots in open cockpits may wear visor instead of label-required eye protection. |

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|---|--|--|
| Personal Protective Equipment | | |
| PPE exception from gloves for pilots in enclosed cockpits | Same as current requirement. | Gloves are optional when entering and leaving aircraft unless required by product label. |
| PPE exception for enclosed cabs | Maintain exception for dermal PPE as in existing rule with same conditions, but handlers in enclosed cabs must wear the labeling-specified respiratory protection except when the only labeling-specified respiratory protection is a particulate filtering facepiece respirator (NIOSH approval number prefix TC-84A), previously called a dust/mist filtering respirator. | Exceptions to the labeling-specified PPE are allowed when handling tasks are performed from inside an enclosed cab that meets the specifications defined in the rule and certain conditions are met. Exceptions to the labeling-required respiratory protection are allowed only if the cab has been certified by the manufacturer to provide respiratory protection equivalent to the respiratory protection required by the pesticide labeling for handling. |
| Decontamination Supplies | | |
| Quantity of water | Provide 1 gallon for each worker and 3 gallons for each handler and each early entry worker as measured at beginning of workers' or handlers' work period. | Provide enough water for routine washing and emergency eye flushing for workers and handlers. For handlers, also provide enough to wash entire body in emergency. |
| Use of natural waters | Must provide water for decontamination. There is no reference to, or prohibition from, using natural waters in addition to decontamination water provided. Workers and handlers are trained to use any nearest clean water source in case of emergency. | Must provide water for decontamination. May use natural waters in addition to water provided for decontamination. |
| Eye wash for handlers | Provide a system capable of delivering 0.4 gallons/minute for 15 minutes, or 6 gallons of water able to flow gently for about 15 minutes at a mix/load site if handlers use products requiring eye protection or use a pressurized closed system. One pint of water in a portable container must be available to each handler applying pesticides if eye protection is required. | Provide enough water for emergency eye flushing. One pint of water in a portable container must be available to each handler if eye protection is required. |
| Emergency Assistance | | |
| Emergency Assistance | Provide prompt transportation to medical facility. Promptly provide the SDS, product information (name, EPA Reg No and active ingredient) and circumstances of exposure to treating medical personnel. | Provide prompt transportation to medical facility and provide any obtainable information about the product, antidote, first aid, and circumstances of exposure to the worker/handler or treating medical personnel. |
| Definitions | | |
| Immediate Family | Expand to also include all in-laws, grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and first cousins. | Includes spouse, parents, stepparents, foster parents, children, stepchildren, foster children, brothers, and sisters. |
| Enclosed space production | New definition: enclosed space production that is indoors or in a structure or space that is covered in whole or in part by any nonporous covering and that is large enough to permit a person to enter. | Greenhouse means an operation inside any structure or space that is enclosed with nonporous covering and that is of sufficient size to permit worker entry. |
| Employ | Employ means to obtain, directly or through a labor contractor, the services of a person in exchange for a salary or wages, including piece-rate wages, without regard to who may pay or who may receive the salary or wages. It includes obtaining the services of a self-employed person, an independent contractor, or a person compensated by a third party. | No definition of "employ" in existing rule. Definitions of "agricultural employer" and "handler employer" covered aspects of what types of employment covered. |