



WORKER PROTECTION STANDARDS

HOSTA Task Sheet 1.2.4

NATIONAL SAFE TRACTOR AND MACHINERY OPERATION PROGRAM

Introduction

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS) regulations of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) require employers to take steps to reduce the risk of pesticide-related illness and injury to those persons who use or are exposed to pesticides.

This task sheet discusses WPS. *Youthful farm workers younger than age 16 years are prohibited from being involved with pesticide applications (see Task Sheet 1.2.1 for allowable work tasks).* Youth farm workers may, however, come into contact with pesticide-treated areas in the course of their daily work. Understanding WPS will help in understanding the need for safety when exposed to agricultural chemicals.

The Standards

Workers who perform hand work in fields (farm and orchards), forests, nurseries, and greenhouses, as well as employees who handle (transport, mix, load, apply) pesticides in agricultural operations, must be provided information about the materials they are using.

There are no exemptions for the size of the farming operation.

WPS regulations require information to be provided to workers. Minimum standards

include:

- Oral (verbal) or posted, written notice of a pesticide application and the restricted entry interval (See page 2, Figure 1.2.4.a.)
- Pesticide safety training
- Pesticide safety posters placed where all workers and handlers can access the information
- Informing workers of pesticide label safety information
- Centrally posted list of recently applied pesticides

WPS regulations also require employees to have access to information and facilities.

Minimum standards include:

- Decontamination facilities nearby to work sites
- Periodic pesticide safety training and ongoing information availability
- Notice of pesticide application and pesticide information
- Clean and maintained personal protective equipment
- Location and access to emergency assistance

As an employee, you may see or be informed of pesticide safety information even though you are not eligible to apply the pesticides. If you are asked to apply pesticides, inform your employer that you are ineligible for the work.

You may have to water, prune, weed, or harvest a pesticide-treated area. Know what WPS means!

Learning Goals

- To become aware of the risks of exposure to agricultural pesticides
- To gain knowledge of Worker Protection Standards (WPS) designed to reduce personal exposure to agricultural pesticides

Related Task Sheets:

Safety and Health Regulations	1.2
Hazardous Occupations Order in Agriculture	1.2.1
Personal Protective Equipment	2.10
Agricultural Pesticides	3.5

MSDS Information

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are provided to consumers for products ranging from paints and solvents to medicines and pesticides. These data sheets provide the consumer with much information regarding the product they have purchased.

MSDS information supplements the pesticide label information. MSDS data does not offset the need to keep pesticide labels on file to meet WPS recordkeeping requirements.

MSDS should be filed for future reference.

Restricted Entry Interval (REI)

WPS designed signs must be used at entrances to treated areas to warn workers and others that pesticide treatment has been made.

These are the rules for posting signs.

- Post signs no more than 24 hours before the pesticide application.
- Keep signs posted during the REI period for 4-48 hours.
- Remove signs within 3 days of application.
- Keep workers out of the area while signs are posted.



Figure 1.2.4.a. Restricted entry interval signs must be posted to alert workers and handlers of pesticide application. Pesticide label information may show 4 to 48 hours REI. No one should enter those areas until warnings are removed.

REI =
Restricted
Entry
Interval

Safety Activities

1. Ask your employer or local agricultural chemical sales representative to show you a pesticide label from the pesticide files. Use the label and/or MSDS to answer these questions. MSDS information can also be found on the Internet.
 - a) What are the health hazards of the product to humans?
 - b) What personal protective equipment is needed to use the product?
 - c) What are the spill control procedures to use for the product?
 - d) What is the REI of that product?
2. Use the Internet to search for specific WPS rules for farm, greenhouse, nursery, and forest pesticide operations.
3. Review the Hazardous Occupations Order in Agriculture for the exact wording of the rule which prohibits workers younger than age 16 from working with pesticides.

References

1. www.usda.gov.
2. www.epa.gov.
3. Pesticide Education Manual: A Guide to Safe Use and Handling (AGRS-80), 3rd Edition, 2001, Information and Communications Technology, The Penn State University, University Park, PA.
4. Agrichemical Fact Sheet 12, Penn State Cooperative Extension Service, EPA Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides.

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