

(BOOK 1 OF 7)

Pesticide Safety Training for
**Employees Handling
Pesticides**

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES



COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE
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Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR)

*California's worker safety regulations specify safe work practices for employees who **handle** pesticides. This booklet summarizes your responsibilities as an employer to assure that you provide the required pesticide safety training to your employees.*

This booklet does not replace product label information, the Pesticide Safety Information Series (PSIS) leaflets, or the California Code of Regulations. It is a reference tool that summarizes specific regulatory requirements and responsibilities that you – the employer – must follow. You are encouraged to contact the agricultural commissioner's office in the county or counties where you operate for any additional requirements specific to your area.

See "**Definition You Need to Know**" at the back of this booklet for an explanation of "handle."

What You Need to Do

ASSURE that each employee assigned to handle pesticides is adequately trained in general pesticide safety and correct pesticide-handling procedures **BEFORE** they are allowed to handle pesticides and at least annually thereafter.

COVER the following subject areas, in a manner the handler-employees can understand, for each pesticide or chemically similar group of pesticides to be used by your handler-employees:

- **Pesticide product labeling** format and meaning of information, such as precautionary statements about human health hazards.
- **Where pesticides are encountered**, including treated surfaces in the field, residues on clothing, personal protective equipment (PPE), application equipment, and drift.
- **Hazards of pesticides (acute, chronic, delayed, and sensitization effects)** identified in pesticide product labeling, Safety Data Sheets (SDS), or PSIS leaflets.
- **Responsibility of the applicator to protect** persons, animals, and property when



applying and not to apply pesticides in a way that results in contact with people not involved in the application.

- Use and care of any **PPE**.
- Employees must be **at least 18 years of age** to handle pesticides used in the production of an agricultural commodity.
- **Routes by which pesticides can enter the body.**
- **Signs and symptoms** of overexposure.
- **Routine decontamination procedures** when handling pesticides including:
 - ✓ Washing hands before eating, drinking, using the toilet, chewing gum, or smoking.
 - ✓ Washing or showering thoroughly, using soap and water.
 - ✓ Changing into clean clothes as soon as possible.
 - ✓ Washing work clothes separately from other clothes and before wearing them again.
- **Safety Data Sheets** provide hazard, emergency medical treatment, and other information about pesticides.



- **Location of written** “Safety Rules for Pesticide Handlers on Farms” (PSIS A-8 leaflet, other PSIS leaflets, and SDS information).
- **Pesticide safety requirements and procedures** in regulation, PSIS leaflets, and SDS, including engineering controls (closed mixing systems, enclosed cabs) for handling, transporting, storing, disposing of pesticides, and spill cleanup.
- **Hazard communication program requirements**
- **Purpose and requirements of medical supervision** when organophosphate or carbamate pesticides with the signal word “DANGER” or “WARNING” are mixed, loaded, or applied.
- **First aid and emergency decontamination** procedures.
- **How and when to get emergency medical care.**
- **Prevention, recognition, and first aid for heat-related illness.**
- **Field posting requirements and restricted entry intervals** when pesticides are applied for the commercial or research production of an agricultural commodity.
- **Environmental concerns** (drift, runoff, and wildlife hazards).

- **Potential hazards to children and pregnant women from pesticide exposure including:**
 - ✓ Keeping children and other family members away from treated areas.
 - ✓ After handling pesticides, employees should remove boots or shoes before entering their home, wash or shower before physical contact with children or family members, and change into clean clothes.
- **Warnings about taking pesticides or pesticide containers home.**
- **How to report suspected pesticide use violations.**
- **Employee rights:**
 - ✓ To personally receive information about pesticides to which he or she may be exposed.
 - ✓ For his or her physician or employee representative designated in writing to receive information about pesticides to which he or she may be exposed.
 - ✓ To be protected against retaliatory action due to the exercise of any of these rights.
 - ✓ To report suspected use violations to DPR or county agricultural commissioner.



DEVELOP a written training program for your handler-employees that describes the materials (e.g., study guides, pamphlets, pesticide product labeling, PSIS leaflets, Safety Data Sheets (SDS), slides, books, video media sources) and information that will be provided and used. Identify the person or firm that will provide the training.

USE A QUALIFIED TRAINER to conduct the training for employees who will be handling pesticides for the commercial or research production of an agricultural commodity. Trainers must be present for the entire presentation, if the training is for employees handling pesticides used for the commercial or research production of an agricultural commodity. The person conducting the training must be qualified as one of the following:

- A California certified applicator.
- A California certified private applicator.
- A person holding a valid County Biologist License in Pesticide Regulation or Investigation and Environmental Monitoring issued by the Department of Food and Agriculture.
- A University of California Extension Advisor.

- A person who has completed an “instructor training” program given by one of the following:
 - ✓ University of California, Integrated Pest Management Program.
 - ✓ Other instructor-training program approved by the Director of the Department of Pesticide Regulation.
- A California licensed Agricultural Pest Control Adviser.
- A California Registered Professional Forester.
- Other trainer qualification approved by the Director.

Training location must be reasonably free from distraction and trainers must be present for the entire presentation.

Repeat training **annually** and continually update your handler-employees training to cover any new pesticides before they are handled.

RECORD for each employee the date and extent of initial and annual required training given and the job to be assigned. For persons employed in the production of an agricultural commodity, the record must also include the employer’s name, training material title(s) and source(s), and trainer’s name and qualifications. **Verify** each record with the employee’s signature and **retain** this record for two years at a central location at the workplace accessible to employees.



What If You Don't Comply?

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) and the County Agricultural Commissioners enforce California pesticide laws and regulations. It is your responsibility to assure that employees handle and use pesticides in accordance with the requirements of law, regulations, and pesticide product labeling requirements.

If you follow the worker safety requirements, you protect your employees' health, the environment, and yourself. If you do not comply, you violate federal and state law. DPR and the County Agricultural Commissioners have the authority to levy substantial penalties on persons who violate pesticide laws. Penalties range from \$50 for minor violations to \$5,000, and/or imprisonment for certain violations that have "created or reasonably could have created a hazard to human health or the environment." Also, persons who hold a license or certificate issued by DPR and who are found in violation can have their license or certificate suspended or revoked.



Definition You Need to Know

Handle – means mixing, loading, transferring, applying (including chemigation), or assisting with the application (including flagging) of pesticides (it does not include: local, state, or federal officials performing inspection, sampling, or other similar duties). Also, it includes:

- Incorporating (mechanically or by watering-in) pesticides in the soil.
- Maintaining, servicing, repairing, cleaning, or handling equipment used in these activities that may contain residues.
- Working with opened (including emptied but not rinsed) containers of pesticides.
- Adjusting, repairing, or removing treatment site coverings.
- Entry into a treated area during any application or before the inhalation exposure level listed on pesticide product labeling has been reached, or enclosed space ventilation criteria have been met.
- Performing the duties of a crop adviser, including field checking or scouting, making observations of the well-being of plants, or taking samples during an application or during any restricted entry interval listed on pesticide product labeling.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact your local County Agricultural Commissioner's office or call toll free 1-877-378-5463 (1-87PestLine).

A complete set of these booklets is available online from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation's website at: **www.cdpr.ca.gov**

Dept. of Industrial Relations Heat Illness Prevention: **www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/heatillnessinfo.html**



Food and Agricultural Code Div. 7 Agricultural Chemicals, Livestock Remedies, and Commercial Feed. 12996; Title 3. California Code of Regulations 6000, 6128, 6130, 6700, 6720, 6723, 6724.



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