

# Pesticide Safety – Emergency First Aid I

## Why learn First Aid when using Pesticides?

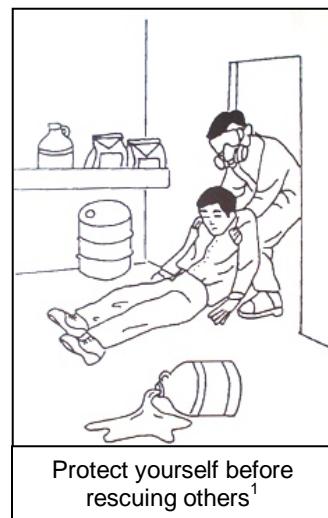
Pesticides are designed for the purpose of killing, halting growth, affecting reproduction, or repelling targeted pests. At the same time, many pesticides are toxic to people, causing harm, illness or death from exposure. Understanding basic first aid procedures in the event of an accident gives the exposed person the greatest chance to minimize harm.

### What to do before an emergency

- Know basic first aid including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) before emergencies occur.
- Read all pesticide labels' first aid information. All labels contain emergency first aid information specifically for that chemical.
  - Note that not all pesticides are treated with the same first aid procedures. For example, if petroleum based and high-corrosive pesticides are swallowed you should **not** induce vomiting as done with other pesticide swallowing. Incorrect first aid may cause the person more harm.
- Post the name, address and contact information of the nearest place for emergency medical help. Be sure everyone knows where the information is. Include the same information in vehicles that may be used in an emergency.
- Have a clean source of water, towels, soap, and a clean change of clothes available near the site where pesticides will be sprayed.

### What to do during a potential or actual emergency

- Protect yourself before administering first aid. If rescuing person from a confined area, do not enter without the proper respiratory equipment.
- Seek medical help immediately, especially if person is exposed to highly toxic chemicals.
- Bring copy of the pesticide label to the medical facility.
- Stop work immediately if exposed person is feeling dizzy, sick or having trouble breathing. If you are the one exposed ask someone nearby for help.



Protect yourself before  
rescuing others<sup>1</sup>

### If pesticide gets on skin or soaks through clothes...

- Leave contaminated area
- Quickly remove clothes and wash with soap.
  - The sooner you act the better chance to avoid injury.
- Seek medical attention.

Prepared by Frank Zalom, Pat Thompson, Mark Henderson and Mark Bell, July 2009

**References:** Pesticide Safety for Small Farms, UC ANR Pub. 21555

The Safe and Effective Use of Pesticides, UC ANR Pub. 3324

**Illustration Credit:**<sup>1</sup>Pesticide Safety for Small Farms, UC ANR Pub. 21555

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