



# COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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## FEDERAL WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD

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This fact sheet describes Restricted Entry Intervals (REIs), a part of Worker Protection Standard (WPS) regulations.

This fact sheet was developed as part of the Comprehensive Worker Protection Standard Awareness Project for Colorado.

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## Restricted Entry Interval (REI)

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS) is a set of regulations from the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) implemented in 1992. WPS was designed to protect agricultural employees from pesticide exposure. Its goal is to ensure the health and safety of agricultural workers, early-entry workers and pesticide handlers who work on agricultural establishments. Restricted Entry Interval is one such regulation.

### Restricted Entry Interval (REI)

REI is the period of time immediately after a pesticide application when agricultural employees may not enter a pesticide treated area without protective clothing. REI's are established for all pesticides used in the production of agricultural plants in greenhouses, farms, forests and nurseries. The REI is based on toxicity and pesticide residue persistence. The REI for each individual pesticide can be found on the pesticide label under the heading "Agricultural Use Requirements" in the "Directions for Use" section of the pesticide label or next to the crop or application method to which it applies.

As an integral part of WPS, the rules and regulations concerning REI's were established in order to protect agricultural employees, both agricultural workers and pesticide handlers, who might normally work within the confines of pesticide treated areas (see Factsheet [Key Definitions](#)).

### Early-Entry

Early-entry is the period of time a worker enters a pesticide treated area before REI has ended. Early-entry workers perform "worker" tasks during REI and may have contact with pesticides by way of soil, water, air and surface of plants. Special protections for early entry workers include special consideration and protections. The following is a short list of added protections for early-entry work as required by WPS regulations.

- **Training and Instruction**

It is important that early-entry workers have had pesticide training as required by WPS and that the training can be verified. All early-entry workers should be allowed access to the pesticide label (see the Factsheet [The Pesticide Label](#)).

- **Decontamination sites**

Agricultural employers should make sure that early-entry workers have at a minimum one (1) gallon of clean water per person, soap and single-use towel, that decontamination sites are no more than 1/4 of a mile from but not within the pesticide treated area, and that each early-entry worker have immediately

accessible at least one (1) pint of emergency eye flush water.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Required PPE are indicated on the pesticide label PPE is important for early-entry workers due to the possibility of exposure to pesticides. For this reason, WPS requires extra provisions for early-entry workers. The following is a list of specific duties for employers to supply early entry workers.

**PPE Regulations** (See Factsheet [Suppliers of PPE](#))

- Supply and inspect all PPE to ensure clean and safe operating conditions (no holes, leaks, tears or worn places)
- Ensure early-entry workers use PPE according to manufacturer instructions and discard pesticide exposed PPE before leaving work
- Provide pesticide-free areas to change into and out of PPE and to store personal items
- Take necessary steps to prevent heat stress (see Factsheet [Heat Stress](#)).
- Ensure those cleaning, maintaining and disposing of PPE follow label and manufacture instructions (see Factsheet [Handling Pesticide Tainted Clothing](#)).

**Short Term Entry**

Specific activities like irrigation, are permitted within the REI restrictions for a treated area although only short term entry is acceptable. Many of these activities are necessary for the health and maintenance of the crop. Short term entry means that workers:

- may not enter the treated area within first four hours of treatment
- should work one hour per worker per day in the field and may not work more
- do not perform hand labor (working with irrigation pipes is not hand labor as it is defined by WPS) wear the required PPE, and are trained in the required early-entry procedures

**Short Term Tasks With No Hand Labor**

Hand Labor is defined under WPS as any agricultural activity performed by hand or with hand tools that might cause a worker to have substantial contact with surfaces (such as plants, plant parts or soil) that may contain pesticide residue. Examples of hand labor tasks include harvesting, thinning, weeding, planting, etc. Agricultural activities NOT considered hand labor include operating, moving or repairing equipment unrelated to pesticide application. Workers may enter pesticide treated areas if:

- entry is after the first four hours of pesticide application or after the inhalation exposure level and ventilation criteria have been met
- the worker uses early-entry PPE stated on the pesticide label
- early-entry does not involve more than one worker, per hour, per day
- worker do not perform hand labor
- worker is well trained about PPE requirements, time constraints and safety precautions prior to entry

## Limited Contact

Limited contact activities are those agricultural tasks that take place where exposure to the pesticide treated area is limited to the feet, lower legs, hands and forearms protected by the required PPE. There is no hand labor permitted when the pesticide product does not have a double notification requirement (both oral and written notice) on the label. In addition, early-entry workers performing limited contact activities cannot enter the treated area during the first four (4) hours after treatment. The employer is responsible to give the early entry worker oral and written notification of all exceptions that might apply to the specific situation (see Fact Sheet # 435 about WPS Regulations for Notifications about Applications)

## Agricultural Emergency Tasks

Early-entry workers may enter pesticide treated areas wearing the required early-entry PPE in the case of an agricultural emergency which may include performing irrigation tasks. They may enter as long as entry to the treated area takes place four (4) hours after pesticides have been applied.

**Disclaimer:** The Worker Protection Standard is a very complex regulation that will require considerable study. This fact sheet is just an introduction and should not be used as a final interpretation. Refer to the complete WPS regulations in the [Code of Federal Register 40 Part 170](#).

## References and Resources

EPA's Agriculture Compliance Center. June 2005. [www.epa.gov/agriculture](http://www.epa.gov/agriculture)

*The Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides - How to Comply, What Employers Need to Know*. July 1993. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA 735-B-93-001, Washington, D.C. EPA Pesticides: Health and Safety.

Agricultural WPS Interpretive Policy: Questions and Answers. June 2004. [www.epa.gov/pesticides/safety/workers/wpsinterpolicy.htm#5.1%20Entry%20Restrictions](http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/safety/workers/wpsinterpolicy.htm#5.1%20Entry%20Restrictions).

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