



COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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FEDERAL WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD

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This fact sheet explains the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) regulations for owners of agricultural establishments and their immediate families.

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

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WPS Requirements for Farmers and Their Immediate Families

The [Worker Protection Standard](#) (WPS) is a set of regulations from the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) implemented by EPA in 1992. WPS was designed to protect agricultural workers from pesticide exposure. Its goal is to ensure the health and safety of agricultural workers and pesticide handlers who work on agricultural establishments. It must be followed when pesticide use is part of the production of agricultural plants on a farm or in a forest, nursery, or greenhouse. People who violate the WPS may be fined by [EPA Region 8](#).

Farmers and their immediate families must comply with only four sections of the WPS: the employer information exchange, restrictions during handling tasks, restrictions during application, and restrictions immediately after application while performing tasks related to the production of agricultural plants on their own establishment. Immediate family includes the spouse, children, stepchildren, foster children, parents, stepparents, foster parents, brothers, sisters, and in-laws of a farmer. Farmers who employ non-family members must follow all WPS requirements.

WPS on the Pesticide Label

To see whether WPS applies for a particular pesticide, check the "Directions for Use" section on each product label for the WPS statement. This includes general-use and restricted-use pesticides applied directly on plants or in the soil. WPS does not apply when pesticides are used on pastures, to control rodents, as bait in traps, on harvested plants, for public pest control, on livestock, on home fruit, vegetable gardens or lawns, and for non-crop areas such as roads (see Factsheet [The Pesticide Label](#)).

Only pesticides used in the production of agricultural plants are covered under the WPS. If a pesticide is covered under WPS, it will be stated on the label under the "Agricultural Use Requirements" section of the pesticide label. If a pesticide with WPS labeling is used on an agricultural establishment covered by the standard, WPS requirements must be followed.

Information Exchange

This section requires farmers to provide the following information to the employer of any custom applicator or crop consultant they hire:

- Specific location and description of all areas being treated with a pesticide within a quarter-mile of where the custom applicator or consultant will be working

all areas under "Restricted Entry Interval" (REI) within a quarter-mile of where the custom applicator or consultant will be working

- Any restrictions for entering areas under application or REI

For further information see Factsheet [Employer/Commercial Applicator Information Exchange](#).

In return, the employer of the custom applicator must provide farmers with the following information before applying pesticides on the farm:

- Location and description of area to be treated.
- Time and date of application.
- Product name, EPA registration number, and active ingredient(s)
- The pesticide's REI
- Whether the product label requires verbal and posted warnings after application
- Any other specific requirements on the product label concerning protection of workers and others during or after application

(See also EPA Ag Center Fact Sheets [WPS—Growers Must Inform Commercial Handlers](#) and [WPS—Commercial Handlers Must Inform Growers](#).)

Restrictions During Handling

Farmers must use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other work clothing listed on the pesticide label. Requirements vary, depending upon the toxicity of the pesticide and the handling activity.

Restrictions During Application

Farmers must make sure that each pesticide is applied so that it does not contact, either directly or through drift, anyone except appropriately trained and equipped handlers. They also must make sure that all people, except appropriately trained and equipped handlers, are kept out of areas being treated with pesticides.

Restrictions After Application

Farmers must be sure that all individuals except trained and equipped handlers are kept out of areas that are under REI. When two or more pesticides with different REIs are applied at the same time, the longer interval must be followed. If the field must be entered before the REI expires, people must wear appropriate PPE and comply with other restrictions. (See Factsheet [Restricted Entry Interval](#).)

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

[Does the WPS Require Growers to Protect Themselves?](#) September 1998. National Agricultural Compliance Assistance Center. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 305-F-98-03. www.epa.gov/agriculture/factsheets/epa-305-f-98-.031.pdf

EPA's Agriculture Compliance Center. June 2005. 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.

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