



Summary of the Worker Protection Standard (CFR 40, Part 170)

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS), issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency became Federal regulation in 1992 and was amended in 1995. It applies to agricultural pesticide users and/or employers of agricultural workers, and covers pesticides that are used in the production of agricultural plants on farms, forests, greenhouses and nurseries. The regulation mandates that agricultural employers meet three requirements: 1. provide employees with **information** about exposure and hazards of pesticides, 2. providing employees with **protections** against pesticide exposure, and 3. **mitigation** of exposure risks.

To provide information to workers, agricultural employers must display information in a central location about the pesticides being used and emergency information. Employers must also provide each worker with pesticide safety training within their first five days of entering a treated area. Workers must be trained at least once every five years. The training must be conducted by a certified trainer (varies from State to State) and must be presented in a manner that the trainees can understand, using a translator if necessary.

The training curriculum is standardized by the EPA and any WPS training must cover 11 specific points, and includes pesticide hazard awareness, how to protect themselves against exposures, emergency procedures, and worker's rights/employer responsibilities.

Employers must provide protection against exposure that includes the basic responsibility to warn workers about areas where pesticides are being applied and where restricted entry intervals are in effect. (Restricted entry interval-ROI-is the period of time between application and the point at which it is safe to enter the area, as specified by the pesticide label). Employers must take steps to prevent workers from entering an area during the ROI.

Employers must mitigate exposure risk by providing decontamination facilities (water, soap, paper towels). Employers must also provide emergency assistance to workers, including transportation to medical facilities and providing medical staff with the pesticide label, Material Safety Data Sheet or other information available.

Employers must not prevent or discourage workers from complying or attempting to comply with the WPS. Retaliation is forbidden.

Enforcement of the WPS is under the jurisdiction of the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs. Penalties for noncompliance include fines and possible criminal penalties if the WPS is knowingly violated.

