

Safety Note #73

AGRICULTURAL FIELD WORKER PESTICIDE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS



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Data published by the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) indicates pesticide exposure was the likely cause of 81 agricultural field worker illnesses or injuries in California during 2003 ⁽¹⁾. Of this total, 58 workers (72%) were exposed to pesticide residue and 19 workers (23%) were exposed to pesticide drift. California Code of Regulations Title 3, Sections 6764 b, d, and e were developed to prevent illness or injuries by requiring agricultural field workers to be trained prior to entering pesticide treated fields to do work.

Pesticide Training Requirements for Agricultural Field Workers

1. Employees assigned work in pesticide treated fields shall receive initial training and refresher training every five years thereafter. Training shall include the following information:
 - The importance of routine decontamination and washing thoroughly after the exposure period.
 - Description of a restricted entry interval and what posting means, including both California and federal field posting sign formulas.
 - Where pesticides are encountered, including treated surfaces in the field, residues on clothing, chemigation, and drift.
 - Routes of exposure.
 - Pesticide hazards, including acute effects, chronic and delayed effects, and sensitization effects.
 - Common signs and symptoms of exposure.
 - First aid including decontamination, eye flushing, and obtaining emergency medical care.
 - Warnings about taking pesticides or pesticide containers home.
 - Description of hazard communication program requirements, including Pesticide Safety Information Series leaflet A-9, MSDS sheets for pesticides, pesticide use records, and right of access to hazard communication program documents.
2. Training information shall be presented in a manner the employee can understand.
3. The person conducting the training shall be qualified as one of the following:
 - California certified commercial applicator.
 - A person holding a valid license or certificate issued by DPR or trainer qualification approved by DPR.
 - Completion of an instructor trainer program approved by DPR or given by the University of California (UC), Integrated Pest Management Program after January 1, 1993.
 - California Registered Professional Forrester.
 - County Biologist License in Pesticide Regulation or Investigation and Environmental Monitoring issued by the Department of Food and Agriculture.
 - A farm advisor employed by a UC Cooperative Extension Office

(1) DPR 2005. *Summary of Results from the California Pesticide Illness Surveillance Program, 2003*. California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Pesticide Regulation, Worker Health and Safety Branch. Report No.HS-1857.