

This clover safe note is intended primarily for 4-H volunteers and staff

#70 HANDLING AND USING PESTICIDES



Photograph Courtesy of
UC Master Gardeners

Information available from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR), Pesticide Illness Surveillance Program indicates, between 1982 and 2003, approximately 800 injuries and illnesses were caused by topical pesticide exposure. During the same time period, an additional 1,800 injuries and illnesses were suspected to be related to topical pesticide exposure. DPR defines topical pesticide exposure as health effects to the eyes and/or skin.

4-H members under the age of 18 should never use pesticides as part of 4-H activities. Pesticides shall only be used by adult volunteers or UC staff members.

Pesticide exposures may be prevented by taking several simple precautions, including protecting your body from pesticides.

California 4-H YDP encourages the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods as an alternative to the use of pesticides in the control of pests. Further information about University of California IPM can be found at: <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/>.

Pesticide Use and Handling Precautions

- When handling pesticides, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn, including eye protection, gloves, long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and closed-toed shoes.
- Always follow all mixing, application, and disposal instructions given on the pesticide label. Additional information about how to read a pesticide label is provided by Clover Safe #68.
- Only use the appropriate pesticide for the intended use, whether there is an infestation by a particular plant or animal pest.
- Only apply pesticides at the manufacturer's recommended rate(s).
- Restrict pesticide applications to those areas where the pest is present.
- Avoid spraying pesticides during windy conditions.
- Carefully apply pesticides in the vicinity of water bodies to prevent inadvertent applications into streams, ponds, canals, reservoirs, etc.
- Do not use pesticides near kitchen counters or other food preparation surfaces.
- Keep pets, children, and other people away from areas where pesticides have recently been applied.
- Never horseplay with pesticide-spray canisters or equipment.
- Do not transfer pesticides into other containers.
- Store pesticides out of the reach of children in a locked cabinet.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water after handling or using pesticides.
- If a pesticide is splashed onto the skin, flush the area thoroughly with running water and then wash with soap and water. If the affected skin area remains irritated, seek medical attention.
- If a pesticide is splashed into an eye, call 911 and immediately hold the eyelid back and begin gently flushing the eye with running water for 15 minutes. If emergency medical services have not arrived after 15 minutes, then immediately seek medical attention.
- If a pesticide has been swallowed or inhaled, immediately call 911.