

Introduction to the EPA Worker Protection Standard

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What is the EPA Worker Protection Standard?

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS) is a regulation originally issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1992 and most recently revised in 2015. This regulation is primarily intended to reduce the risks of illness or injury to workers and handlers resulting from occupational exposures to pesticides used in the production of agricultural plants¹ on agricultural establishments².

The WPS requires agricultural employers to provide specific information and protections to workers, handlers and other persons when WPS-labeled pesticide products³ are used on agricultural establishments in the production of agricultural plants.



¹ Any plant, or part thereof, grown, maintained, or otherwise produced for commercial purposes, including growing, maintaining or otherwise producing plants for sale, trade, for research or experimental purposes, or for use in part or their entirety in another location. Agricultural plant includes, but is not limited to, grains, fruits and vegetables; wood fiber or timber products; flowering and foliage plants and trees; seedlings and transplants; and turf grass produced for sod. Agricultural plant does not include pasture or rangeland used for grazing.

² Any farm, forest operation, or nursery engaged in the outdoor or enclosed space production of agricultural plants. An establishment that is not primarily agricultural is an agricultural establishment if it produces agricultural plants for transplant or use (in part or their entirety) in another location instead of purchasing the agricultural plants.

³ A pesticide product that contains an AGRICULTURAL USE REQUIREMENTS box under DIRECTIONS FOR USE.

Example of WPS-labeled pesticide product statement

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AGRICULTURAL USE REQUIREMENTS

Use this product only in accordance with its labeling and with the Worker Protection Standard 40 CFR part 170. This Standard contains requirements for the protection of agricultural workers on farms, nurseries, and greenhouses and handlers of agricultural pesticides. It contains requirements for training, decontamination, notification, and emergency assistance. It also contains specific instructions and exceptions pertaining to the statements on this label about personal protective equipment (PPE) and restricted-entry interval. The requirements in this box only apply to uses of this product that are covered by the Worker Protection Standard. **Do not enter or allow workers to enter treated areas during the restricted-entry interval (REI) of 12 hours.** PPE required for early entry to treated areas that is permitted under the Worker Protection Standard and that involves contact with anything that has been treated such as plants, soil, or water is:

- Coveralls,
- Chemical resistant gloves made of any waterproof material,
- Shoes plus socks and
- Protective eyewear.

Special Eye Irritation Provisions: Chlorothalonil in this product is a severe eye irritant. Although the restricted entry interval expires after 12 hours for the next 6.5 days entry is permitted only when the following safety measures are provided:

1. At least one container designed specifically for flushing eyes must be available in operating condition at the WPS required decontamination site intended for workers entering the treated area.
2. Workers must be informed, in a manner they can understand:
 - that residues in the treated area may be highly irritating to their eyes
 - that they should take precautions such as refraining from rubbing their eyes to keep the residues out of their eyes
 - that if they do get residues in their eyes they should immediately flush their eyes using the eyeflush container that is located at the decontamination site or using other readily available clean water
 - how to operate the eyeflush container

Where can I get more information and training materials?

All educational and training materials are available online through the Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (visit <https://www.pesticideresources.org/>).

