

WPS Guidelines for Cornell Supervisors and Applicators

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS): A regulation issued by the U.S. EPA. It covers pesticides that are used in the production of agricultural plants on farms, forests, nurseries, and greenhouses. The WPS requires you to take steps to reduce the risk of pesticide-related illness and injury if you (1) use such pesticides, or (2) employ workers or pesticide handlers who are exposed to such pesticides. This document is an introduction to the Worker Protection Standard. More information about correct implementation of the Standard can be found in the How to Comply manual, referenced at the end of this document.

Who does the WPS protect? The WPS requires employers to take steps to protect 2 types of employees: workers and pesticide handlers.

A **worker** is anyone who:

1. is employed for any type of compensation, and
2. is doing tasks, such as harvesting, weeding, or watering, relating to the production of agricultural plants on a farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse.

A **pesticide handler** is anyone who:

1. is employed for any type of compensation by an agricultural establishment or a commercial pesticide handling establishment that uses pesticides in the production of agricultural plants on a farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse, and
2. is doing any of the following tasks:
 - mixing, loading, transferring or applying pesticides,
 - handling opened containers of pesticides,
 - acting as a flagger
 - cleaning, handling, adjusting, or repairing the parts of mixing, loading, or application equipment that may contain pesticide residues,
 - assisting with the application of pesticides, including incorporating the pesticide into the soil after the application has occurred,
 - entering a greenhouse or other enclosed area after application and before the inhalation exposure level listed on the product labeling has been reached or one of the WPS ventilation criteria has been met to:
 - operate ventilation equipment
 - adjust or remove coverings, such as tarps, used in fumigation, or
 - check air concentration levels,
 - entering a treated area outdoors after application of any soil fumigant to adjust or remove soil coverings,
 - performing tasks as a crop advisor:
 - during any pesticide application,
 - before any inhalation exposure level or ventilation criteria listed in the labeling has been reached or one of the WPS ventilation criteria has been met,
 - during any restricted-entry interval,
 - disposing of pesticides or pesticide containers.

Which pesticide uses are covered?

Most pesticide uses involved in the production of agricultural plants on a farm, forest, nursery or greenhouse are covered by the WPS. This includes pesticides used on plants, and pesticides used on the soil or planting medium the plants are (or will be) grown in. Both general-use and restricted-use pesticides are covered by the WPS. You will know that the product is covered by the WPS if you see a statement beginning “Agricultural Use Requirements” in the Directions for Use section of the pesticide label.

If you are using a pesticide product with labeling that refers to the Worker Protection Standard, you must comply with the WPS. Otherwise, you will be in violation of Federal law, since it is illegal to use a pesticide product in a manner inconsistent with its labeling.

Which pesticide uses are not covered?

Some pesticide uses are not covered by the WPS, even when the Agricultural Use Requirements section is on the labeling. The pesticide uses not covered by WPS, which are most likely to occur in CALS, include pesticides applied:

- for control of vertebrate pests, such as rodents;
- as attractants or repellents in traps;
- on the portions of agricultural plants that have been harvested, such as in packing houses or on cut timber;
- on livestock or other animals, or in or around animal premises;
- on plants that are in ornamental gardens, parks, golf courses, and public or private lawns and grounds and that are intended only for decorative or environmental benefit; and
- for research uses of unregistered pesticides.

WPS Requirements - General

The WPS has three primary goals:

1. Inform employees about the hazards of pesticides.
2. Protect employees by eliminating or reducing exposure to pesticides.
3. Mitigate exposures that do occur.

Inform Employees: Training

All employees must receive basic pesticide information before they work with treated agricultural plants. Complete the "Basic Pesticide Training Requirements for Workers" form with each employee before any exposure occurs.

Send all employees who will work with treated agricultural plants to the complete Worker Protection Standard training. Handlers and early-entry workers who will contact anything that has been treated must be trained before doing a handling or early-entry task. Workers and early-entry workers who will not contact anything that has been treated must be trained before they accumulate more than 5 separate days of entry into treated areas.

Inform Employees: Central Posting Requirements

What information must be displayed?

1. A Pesticide Application List, which must include:
 - the location and description of the area to be treated,
 - product name, EPA registration number, and active ingredient(s) of the pesticide,
 - time and date the pesticide is scheduled to be applied, and
 - restricted-entry interval for the pesticide.

2. Emergency information, which must include the name, address, and telephone number of the nearest emergency medical facility. For Cornell (central campus) facilities:

Name: Cayuga Medical Center
Street: 101 Dates Drive
City: Ithaca, NY
Telephone: 607-274-4411 (emergency department)
607-274-4011 (hospital operator)

You should also post an emergency number. For the central campus, the number is 911. Off-campus locations should use their community emergency number (which may also be 911).

For more information on pesticides call: DEC Region 7, 607-753-3095 (or other local DEC #).

3. A pesticide safety poster, which must be either the WPS safety poster developed by EPA or an equivalent poster that contains the concepts identified by the EPA.

Timing of Application List Information

1. Record the required pesticide-specific information on the application list and display it before the application takes place (post up to 24 hours in advance). If the pesticide is not applied as scheduled, you must list the corrected time and date that the application takes place. List the correction before the application takes place or as soon as practical thereafter.
2. Continue to display pesticide-specific information until:
 - at least 30 days after the restricted-entry interval expires, or
 - at least 30 days after the end of the application, if there is no restricted-entry interval for the pesticide.

Inform Employees: Other Responsibilities

1. Inform workers and handlers where the information is located.
2. Allow workers and handlers access to the information.
3. Be sure that the poster, emergency information, and application list remain legible during the time they are posted.
4. Promptly inform workers if there is any change in the information on emergency medical facilities and update the emergency information listed with the poster.
5. Pesticide handlers and early-entry workers must have access to label information.

Inform Employees: Notice about Applications

Under most circumstances, you must make sure that workers are notified about areas where pesticide applications are taking place or where restricted-entry intervals are in effect. Some pesticide labels require you to notify workers BOTH orally and with signs posted at entrances to the treated area.

For applications on farms, forests and nurseries, unless the pesticide labeling requires both types of notification, notify workers either orally or by posting warning signs at entrances to treated areas. CALS strongly encourages the use of warning signs in all cases.

In greenhouses, you **must** post all treated areas. You must also notify workers orally if the pesticide labeling requires both types of notification.

Protect Employees: Restrictions During and After Applications

During Applications

Keep everyone except appropriately trained and equipped handlers out of areas being treated with pesticides.

Pesticide applicators 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.

In nurseries and greenhouses, during some applications, keep persons out of the area immediately around the area being treated.

During Restricted-Entry Intervals

In general, keep workers out of a treated area during the restricted-entry interval. This restriction has only two exceptions:

1. Early entry with no contact.
2. Early entry with contact for short-term, emergency, or specially excepted tasks.

Entry into treated areas during a restricted-entry interval is also allowed to perform handling (including crop advisor) tasks as long as the persons entering such areas are trained and equipped as pesticide handlers and receive all other applicable WPS handler protections.

Protect Employees: Monitoring Applicators and Handlers

Pesticide applicators and handlers must be monitored when handling certain types of pesticides:

- Pesticides with skull and crossbones. At least once every 2 hours, someone must check on - by sight or by voice communication - any handler who is handling a pesticide that has a skull and crossbones symbol on the label.
- Fumigants Handled in Greenhouses. Someone must maintain constant visual or voice contact with any handler who is applying or otherwise handling a fumigant in a greenhouse.

Protect Employees: Personal Protective Equipment

The supervisor must:

1. Provide handlers with the appropriate PPE in clean and operating condition.
2. Make sure the handlers wear the PPE correctly and use it according to the manufacturer's instructions. If a handler wears a respirator, s/he must participate in the Cornell University Respiratory Protection Program.
3. Inspect all PPE before each day of use for leaks, holes, tears, or worn places, and repair or discard any damaged equipment.
4. Provide handlers with clean places away from pesticide storage and pesticide use areas to:
 - store personal clothing not in use,
 - put on PPE at the start of any exposure period,
 - take off PPE at the end of any exposure period.
5. Take any necessary steps to prevent heat illness while PPE is being worn.
6. Do not allow any handler to wear home or take home PPE contaminated with pesticides.

Mitigation: Decontamination Sites

A decontamination site must be provided:

- For handlers, for the duration of the handling task.
- For workers, until 30 days after the end of any restricted-entry interval for that area.
- At any mixing area.

Each decontamination site must provide:

1. Water - enough for washing the entire body and emergency eyeflushing.
2. Soap and single-use towels.
3. Clean change of clothes.

Decontamination sites must be located no more than 1/4 mile from the work area.

At the site where PPE is removed, provide:

1. soap,
2. clean towels, and
3. enough water to allow handlers to wash thoroughly after removing PPE.

Mitigation: Emergency Assistance

The supervisor or pesticide applicator must make emergency transportation available to take a worker or handler to an emergency medical facility to provide treatment if there is reason to believe that the employee has been poisoned or injured by a pesticide. Transportation may be provided by taking the employee directly to the emergency medical facility, by calling an ambulance, or by making sure that employee has a ride to the medical facility with someone else.

The supervisor or pesticide applicator must provide to the worker or handler or to the treating medical personnel, promptly upon request, any obtainable information on:

1. product name, EPA registration number, and active ingredients for any product(s) to which the person may have been exposed,
2. antidote, first aid, statement of practical treatment and other medical or emergency information from the product labeling,
3. description of the way the pesticide was being used, and
4. circumstances of the worker's or handler's exposure to the pesticide.