

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Proposed Changes to the Farm Worker Protection Standard

The Environmental Protection Agency issued proposed changes to the Agricultural Worker Protection Standard (WPS) to increase protections from pesticide exposure for the nation's two million agricultural workers and their families. Proposed changes:

- Annual mandatory trainings (rather than once every 5 years) to inform farm workers about the protections they are afforded under the law, including restrictions on entering pesticide-treated fields and surrounding areas, decontamination supplies, access to information and use of personal protective equipment. Expanded trainings will include instructions to reduce take-home exposure from pesticides on work clothing and other safety topics.
- Expanded mandatory posting of no-entry signs for the most hazardous pesticides. The signs prohibit entry into pesticide-treated fields until residues decline to a safe level.
- First-time ever minimum age requirement: Children under 16 will be prohibited from handling pesticides, with an exemption for family farms.
- New no-entry 25-100 foot buffer areas surrounding pesticide-treated fields will protect workers and others from exposure from pesticide overspray and fumes.
- Mandatory record-keeping to improve states' ability to follow-up on pesticide violations and enforce compliance. Records of application-specific pesticide information as well as farmworker training and early-entry notification must be kept for two years.

Additional Proposed Changes

- Personal Protection Equipment (respirator use) must be consistent with the Occupational Safety & Health Administration standards for ensuring respirators are effective, including fit test, medical evaluation and training.
- Requirement to make available to farm workers or their advocates (including medical personnel) information specific to the pesticide application, including the pesticide label and Safety Data Sheets.
- Additional changes make the rule more practical and easier to comply with for farmers.
- Continues the exemptions for family farms.

For more information: www.epa.gov/pesticides/
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