



COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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FEDERAL WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD

F.R. Sternlieb
S.K. McDonald
L.M. Hofsteen

This fact sheet lists the necessary detailed information required under the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) for written and/or oral notifications about pesticide applications.

This fact sheet was revised as part of the Comprehensive Worker Protection Standard Awareness Project for Colorado.

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WPS Regulations for Notification about Applications

The [Worker Protection Standard](#) (WPS) was revised and expanded in 1992 by the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA). This regulation applies where pesticides are used in production of agricultural plants for commercial or research purposes on farms, forests, nurseries, greenhouses, and related structures. It covers pesticide applicators, mixer/loaders, disposers of pesticide containers, and those who may be exposed to a pesticide residue on the job. Both general-use and restricted-use pesticides are covered by WPS. The regulations have exposure reduction measures that will reduce the risk of pesticide poisonings and injuries among agricultural workers and pesticide handlers.

Finding Notification Information on the Label

WPS regulations require by law that owners of agricultural establishments inform agricultural employees where pesticides have been applied. If employees are within 1/4 mile of an area being treated or under Restricted Entry Interval (REI), employers are required to provide notification about applications *before the application takes place*. This is to protect workers so they do not enter fields which have been sprayed and are under REI. Some pesticides require verbal or written notification while other pesticides require both. The type of notification required will be indicated on the label. Directions on the label for both forms of notification are located under the heading *Agricultural Use Requirements*. The employer is responsible for notifying all workers which form of notification will be used.

If employees are not involved with the treatment or are not going to be in a 1/4 of a mile vicinity of the treated area or if the employee who applied or supervised the application is aware of all required information, no notification is required. However, the application must be recorded and listed at the Central Location.

Written Notification

Field signs must be posted in order to warn agricultural employees in advance about pesticide applications. See U.S. EPA website for posting requirements of [warning signs](#) for farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses. Field signs must be posted:

- by all entrances where workers would enter the field
- by all access roads
- at each established walking route that



- enters treated area
- on the border of all labor camps adjacent to the treated field
- 24 hours or less before scheduled application of pesticide
- removed within three (3) days after the end of the REI (if there is no REI, remove signs 3 days after application)

Oral Notification

Verbal warning must occur before application and be presented in a manner understood by the employee. Verbal warnings must contain the following information:

- location and description of the treated area
- length of REI
- specific directions not to enter treated area during REI

Definition of Restricted-Entry Interval (REI)

The REI is the time immediately after a pesticide application when entry into the treated area is limited. Some pesticides have one REI, such as 12 hours, for all crops and uses. Other products have different REI's depending on the crop or method of application. When two or more pesticides are applied at the same time, and have different REI's, the longer interval must be observed. The REI is listed on the pesticide labeling under the heading *Agricultural Use Requirements* in the *Directions for Use* section of the pesticide label or next to the crop or application method to which it applies.

Family Exceptions for Application Notification

Farms employing only immediate family members are not required to post field signs in the treated area. Immediate family members include spouse, children, stepchildren, foster children, parent, stepparents, foster parents, brothers and sisters. However, family members must follow all REI restrictions. It is *advisable* for the farmers' family protection that some form of notification is given about where and when pesticide applications will take place within the agricultural establishment.

Notification Requirements for Nurseries and Greenhouses

EPA requires notification (posted field signs) of pesticide use at every entrance for all treated areas within nurseries and greenhouses. If the pesticide label requires both forms of notification, the employer should also notify employees with an oral warning. This regulation does not apply if employees will not be in the greenhouse during application or while the REI is in effect.

If soil or plants have been treated with pesticide and are moved to a new location, the application records should be updated and inform workers of both sites and all changes that have been made. If the change is anticipated, the posted signs may contain information on both the original and future sites, in which case the signs will not need updating.

Disclaimer: The Worker Protection Standard is a very complex regulation that will require considerable study. This fact sheet is just an introduction and should not be used as a final interpretation. Refer to the complete WPS regulations in the [Code of Federal Register 40 Part 170](#).

References and Resources

EPA's Agriculture Compliance Center. June 2005. www.epa.gov/agriculture

The Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides - How to Comply, What Employers Need to Know. July 1993. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA 735-B-93-001, Washington, D.C.

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