

Cotton

Cotton Producers Facing The Worker Protection Standard

Spring 2001

Information Sheet 1

Understanding the Regulation

In 1992, the Worker Protection Standard (WPS)(40 CFR Part 170) was revised by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and all provisions were fully implemented in 1995. Changes were also made in the requirements for pesticide recordkeeping in 1993 before the implementation of the WPS. This resulted from action by the United States Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA-AMS) under the **Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade (FACT) Act of 1990**. The act gave authority to the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the Administrator of EPA, to require certified applicators of restricted-use pesticides (RUPs) to maintain records comparable to those maintained by commercial applicators of pesticides in each state. Precise records were specified.

The WPS regulates the use of pesticides in production of agricultural plants on farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses and is directed at reducing pesticide-related illness and injury by the user or workers or pesticide handlers who are exposed to pesticides.

Under this regulation, the agricultural pesticide user and/or an employer of agricultural workers and pesticide handlers are required to provide employees with information about exposure to pesticides, protection against exposures to pesticides and ways to mitigate exposure (decontamination, emergency assistance) to pesticides.

Does the WPS Apply to Your Cotton Farming Operation?

It Does If:

- * You own or manage a cotton farm where pesticides are used in the production of agricultural plants.
- * You hire or contract for the services of agricultural workers engaged in the production of agricultural plants on the farm.
- * You operate a business in which you (or people you employ) apply pesticides used in the production of agricultural plants on the farm.
- * You operate a business in which you (or people you employ) perform tasks as a crop advisor.

REQUIREMENTS: ALL EMPLOYERS (These are only general descriptions of requirements. Refer to the WPS regulation for more detailed information not covered in this information sheet.)

ANTI-RETALIATION

Workers and handlers who attempt to comply with the WPS must not be retaliated against.

INFORMATION AT THE CENTRAL LOCATION

Each farm establishment must have a central location where specific information is visible and accessible to workers and handlers. The information shall include an EPA WPS safety poster, emergency medical facility address and other information and specific facts about each pesticide application.

SAMPLE LABELING

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, forests, 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), notification to workers and restricted entry interval. The requirements in this box apply to uses of this product that are within areas covered by the Worker Protection Standard.

Do not enter or allow worker entry into treated areas during the restricted entry interval (REI) of 48 hours. The REI is 72 hours in outdoor areas where average annual rainfall is less than 25 inches a year.

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 over long-sleeved shirt and long pants
- chemical-resistant gloves, such as barrier laminate or viton
- chemical-resistant footwear plus socks
- protective eyewear
- chemical-resistant headgear

Notify workers of the application by warning them orally and by posting warning signs at entrances to treated areas.

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PESTICIDE SAFETY TRAINING

Workers and handlers must be trained with approved materials before they begin work and again after a specific number of years designated by federal and state laws.

DECONTAMINATION SOURCES

Decontamination supplies must be available within one-quarter mile to workers and handlers. Supplies required are enough water for routine and emergency whole-body washing and for eye flushing, plenty of soap and single use towels and a clean coverall.

EMPLOYER INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The commercial handler employers and operators of agricultural establishments must communicate before a pesticide application is made so that each is aware of specific details of the pesticide and treated area.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

If a worker or handler is poisoned or injured by a pesticide, the employer must make transportation available to the medical facility and provide information about the poisoning and pesticide labeling.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS: WORKER EMPLOYERS

RESTRICTIONS DURING APPLICATION

Entry information and distance from treated area are specified under this provision of the WPS.

RESTRICTED ENTRY INTERVALS (REIs)

During the REI, do not allow workers to enter a treated area and come in contact with anything treated with the pesticide to which the REI applies.

NOTIFICATION

Under most circumstances, employers 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 notification both orally and by posting signs. The employer must inform workers which method of notification is being used.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS: HANDLER EMPLOYERS

APPLICATION RESTRICTIONS AND MONITORING

Specifies details that the handler and handler employer must follow on safe application of a pesticide and the sight and voice contact within two hours.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR HANDLERS

Handlers must be informed in a manner they understand of all pesticide labeling instructions for safe use, have labeling available to them and have knowledge of safe use of equipment as well as other areas discussed in this provision of the WPS. When commercial handlers will be on an agricultural establishment, they must be informed beforehand of areas on the establishment where pesticide will be applied or where an REI will be in effect and any restrictions on entering those areas.

EQUIPMENT SAFETY

This provision of the regulation requires inspection, repair and replacement of parts as needed. Cleaning and adjustment of equipment is to be undertaken only by appropriately trained and personal protective-equipped handlers.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The handler employer must provide handlers with the PPE the pesticide labeling requires for the task and be sure that the PPE is clean, worn correctly, inspected daily, repaired or replaced as needed, and disposed of correctly. A pesticide-free area for dressing must be provided.

SOURCES FOR OBTAINING MORE INFORMATION:

- * Federal Register (Worker Protection Standard 40 CFR Parts 156 & 170)
- * The Office of the Environmental Protection Agency in your region (see below)
- * Previous newsletters published by the Cotton Foundation and National Cotton Council (www.cotton.org/ncc/technical/wps/)
- * "How to Comply Manual" published by the EPA
- * Pesticide State Lead Agency
- * Pesticide Coordinators with State Cooperative Extension Services
- * USEPA Web site on worker protection (www.epa.gov/oppfead1/safety/workers/workers.htm)

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