

■ STATE PEST CONTROL LAWS (*WORKER SAFETY*)

TERMS:

Field Worker Safety — Agricultural employers must comply with the standards summarized below, among others, to protect the safety of field workers who may be exposed to pesticides through entry into areas treated with pesticides.

Hazard Communication — Whenever workers are working as field workers in a treated field, the employer must display state-provided safety information leaflets at the worksite or at a central gathering place. The employer must also keep pesticide use records and a safety data sheet for each pesticide listed in those records, and must furnish them to their workers, employees of a labor contractor, or treating medical personnel upon request.

Application Information — Before workers are allowed to enter any field treated with a pesticide, the employer must display at a central location specific information about the treatment, including the specific location, the date and time of the application, the names of the pesticides involved, and a copy of the safety data sheets for the pesticides applied.

Field Work During Pesticide Applications — It is illegal to direct or allow any person to enter or remain in a treated area of a field during a pesticide application, other than those who are involved in the application and are wearing protective clothing or equipment.

Training — Every worker assigned to work in a treated field must have received pesticide safety training within the preceding 12 months before beginning to work in a treated field. The training must be conducted in a way the worker understands, and must include topics such as the hazards of pesticides, how exposure can happen, entry intervals, signs and symptoms of over-exposure, first aid, and employee rights.

Emergency Medical Care — Emergency medical care for workers who enter fields treated with pesticides must be planned for in advance. The employer must locate a facility where emergency care is available, and the workers or their supervisor must be informed of the name and location of a doctor or medical facility where such care is available. When there is reason to suspect that a worker has a pesticide illness or over-exposure, the employer must ensure that the worker is taken to a doctor immediately. Doctors and others treating an injured worker must be given information about the pesticides involved and how the worker was exposed.

Decontamination Facilities — Not more than 1/4 mile from where field workers are at work (or at the nearest point of access), the employer must provide water, soap and single-use towels for washing of hands and face, and for emergency eye flushing. Workers must be told where the decontamination site is before they enter a treated field.

Field Re-Entry After Pesticide Applications — Under most circumstances, workers are not allowed to enter any area treated with a pesticide until the farm operator has been notified that the application has been completed and the restricted-entry interval has expired.

Warning Signs — Employers must post warning signs around treated fields in many situations, including (1) whenever required by the pesticide product label, (2) whenever applications are made in an entirely or partially enclosed space, and (3) prior to outdoor applications with a restricted-entry interval greater than 48 hours. Warning signs must be in English and Spanish (or other language read by a majority of workers who do not read English), posted at entry points around the fields involved and along unfenced public roads. The signs must be of prescribed size and include the skull and crossbones symbol and the words "Danger" and "Keep Out." Warning signs must be posted no sooner than 24 hours before the application, may not be removed during the re-entry period, and must be removed no later than 3 days after the end of the re-entry period and before workers are allowed to re-enter the fields to perform crop maintenance or harvest operations.

Safety of Pesticide Handlers — Among many other detailed requirements, the provisions outlined below apply to workers who mix, load, apply or assist in applying pesticides. These workers must be at least 18 years old.

Hazard Communication — Before workers are allowed to handle pesticides, the employer must display at a central location at the workplace state-provided informational leaflets, must maintain pesticide use records and a safety data sheet for each pesticide listed in those records, and must furnish them to their employees.

Training — Employers of pesticide mixers, loaders, non-certified applicators and their assistants must provide safety training to each such worker. Training must cover a range of topics, including pesticide hazards, safety procedures, protective clothing and equipment, the common symptoms of pesticide poisoning, sources of emergency medical treatment, the purposes and requirements for medical supervision, pesticide label requirements, and related laws and regulations. Training must occur before any pesticide worker is allowed to handle pesticides, and at least once a year thereafter.

Medical Care and Supervision — Employers must make arrangements for medical care in the event of pesticide-related emergencies, as well as for medical supervision of workers exposed to certain highly toxic pesticides for long periods of time. Doctors and others treating injured workers must be given information about the pesticides involved and how the workers were exposed.

Restrictions for Persons Working Alone — An employee working alone during daylight hours mixing, loading or applying certain especially toxic pesticides is required to make radio, telephone or face-to-face contact with a responsible adult at least once every 2 hours (at least once every hour, if working at night).

Changing Facilities — At each site where workers mix or load certain types of pesticides, the employer must provide a pesticide-free area where workers can change clothes, store their change of clothes, and wash

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themselves. Clean towels, soap and sufficient water must be available for thorough washing.

Decontamination Facilities — Not more than 1/4 mile from where workers are handling pesticides, the employer must provide water, soap and single-use towels for routine washing of hands and face, and for emergency eye flushing and washing of the entire body.

Work Clothing and Safety Equipment — When required by product labeling, the employer must provide prescribed personal protective equipment — including safety glasses and gloves — for each mixer, loader, flagger or applicator of specified toxic pesticides.

ENFORCEMENT: *California Department of Pesticide Regulation, Sacramento, California 95814 (916-324-4100).*