

■ **OREGON SAFE EMPLOYMENT ACT (*WORKER PROTECTION*)**

TERMS: The state agency that administers the Oregon Safe Employment Act has adopted the worker protection standard established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (*see entry, U.S. — Pesticides & Agricultural Chemicals — Field Worker Safety Standards*), and applied it to all agricultural workers and pesticide handlers in Oregon. In addition, the state agency has adopted related rules especially relevant to the safety and health of workers exposed to pesticides, briefly summarized here:

Personal Protective Equipment — Farm employers are required to assess their workplaces to determine if hazards exist, or are likely to be present, which would make the use of personal protective equipment necessary to protect their workers. If so, employers must select appropriate protective equipment and ensure that each exposed worker use it. The employer is responsible for paying the cost of any specialized equipment, but the workers must pay for everyday protective items like gloves, long-sleeve shirts, long pants, conventional boots, broad-brim hats, and sunscreen.

Workers who are required to use personal protective equipment must receive training in its use, provided by the employer. Training must cover such topics as (1) when protective equipment is necessary, (2) how to put on, adjust and remove the equipment, and (3) the proper care, maintenance, storage and disposal of the equipment.

Respiratory Protection — When necessary to protect a worker against the adverse health effects of breathing pesticides or other agricultural chemicals in the air, a farm employer is required to provide the worker with a respirator and the worker is required to use it. Moreover, the employer must have an effective, written respiratory protection program that includes procedures for (1) selecting, fitting, maintaining and discarding respiratory equipment, and (2) training workers in the respiratory hazards to which they may be exposed and the effective use of respiratory equipment. In some situations, the program may include certain prescribed medical evaluations.

ENFORCEMENT: *Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division, Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services, Salem, Oregon 97309 (503-378-3272; toll-free 800-922-2689).*

SPECIAL NOTE: An employer may not fire, discipline or discriminate in any way against a worker because the worker has filed a complaint, participated in a proceeding, or exercised any other right afforded by these provisions. A worker who has been subjected to retaliation may file a complaint with the *Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, Portland, Oregon 97232 (971-673-0844)* at any time within 90 days after learning of the alleged violation.