

Changes to EPA's Farm Worker Protection Standard

The Environmental Protection Agency has revised the 1992 Agricultural Worker Protection Standard regulation to increase protection from pesticide exposure for the nation's two million agricultural workers and their families. These changes will afford farmworkers similar health protections that are already afforded to workers in other industries while taking into account the unique working environment of many agricultural jobs.

The regulation seeks to protect and reduce the risks of injury or illness to agricultural workers (those who perform hand-labor tasks in pesticide-treated crops, such as harvesting, thinning, pruning) and pesticide handlers (those who mix, load and apply pesticides) use and contact with pesticides on farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses. The regulation does not cover persons working with livestock.

Major changes to the regulation:

- Annual mandatory training to inform farmworkers on the required protections. This increases the likelihood that protections will be followed. *Currently, training is only once every 5 years.*
- Expanded training includes instructions to reduce take-home exposure from pesticides on work clothing and other safety topics.
- First-time ever minimum age requirement: Children under 18 are prohibited from handling pesticides.
- 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.
- New no-entry application-exclusion zones up to 100 feet surrounding pesticide application equipment will protect workers and others from exposure to pesticide overspray and fumes.
- Requirement to provide more than one way for farmworkers and their representatives to gain access to pesticide application information and safety data sheets – centrally-posted, or by requesting records.
- 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, must be kept for two years.
- Anti-retaliation provisions are comparable to Department of Labor's (DOL's).
- Changes in personal protective equipment will be consistent with the DOL's Occupational Safety & Health Administration standards for ensuring respirators are effective, including fit test, medical evaluation and training.
- Specific amounts of water to be used for routine washing, emergency eye flushing and other decontamination, including eye wash systems for handlers at pesticide mixing/loading sites.
- Continue the exemption for farm owners and their immediate family with an expanded definition of immediate family.

Additional information on the rule is available at:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/revisions-worker-protection-standard>