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When to Provide Pesticide Safety Training

Due to the nature of their jobs, workers, early-entry workers, and handlers may frequently work in or near areas that are being or have been treated with pesticides. Therefore, the federal Worker Protection Standard (WPS) requires these individuals to receive pesticide safety training before working on agricultural establishments.



Photo courtesy of Chazzbo Media

Table 3.1: WPS Training Requirements and Frequency

	Pesticide Handlers	Early-Entry Workers	Agricultural Workers
Requirement	Training must be provided before any handling activity.	Training must be provided before entry into an area under a restricted-entry interval (REI).	Training must be provided before working in a “treated area.” A treated area is any site where a pesticide has been applied and an REI has been in effect within the last 30 days.
Frequency	Provide training each year.	Provide training each year. Provide product-specific information before every early-entry task.	Provide training each year.

The WPS does not require employers to actually conduct the training themselves, however, the employers must ensure each worker or handler receives or has received the appropriate training.

If worker or handler attended WPS training while working for a previous employer within the past 12 months and the training can be verified, the new employer can wait until the training expiration date to retrain that individual. However, the new employer needs to inform all employees, even those who received WPS training elsewhere, about the central posting area and decontamination sites on the establishment.

Qualified Trainers

Under the **federal** Worker Protection Standard, people who conduct WPS pesticide safety training for handlers, early-entry workers, and workers must:

- be designated as a trainer of certified applicators, handlers or workers by EPA or the state or tribal agency responsible for pesticide enforcement,
- be currently certified as an applicator of restricted-use pesticides, or
- have completed an EPA-approved pesticide safety train-the-trainer program for workers (if training workers) and/or for handlers (if training handlers).

Additional Requirements for Trainers

Trainers who meet any of the above federal trainer certification criteria must also check with their state pesticide regulatory agency to ask about state certification requirements, trainer agreements, and additional state pesticide-related regulations that must be included in the training.

Similarly, employers who own or lease agricultural establishments located on tribal land should contact the agency overseeing the tribe's pesticide or environmental program before WPS training is conducted at their worksite. Tribal pesticide regulatory agency staff can provide employers and trainers with additional information about trainer certification requirements, pesticide ordinances, and regulations that are unique to their community.

A person designated by EPA or the State or Tribal agency as a trainer of workers, may train agricultural workers. They are not qualified to train pesticide handlers.

EPA-Approved Training Materials

Beginning January 2, 2018, if the trainer uses pesticide safety training materials, such as a DVD or informational booklet, these training materials must be approved by EPA and contain the most current WPS information. EPA-approved materials will carry an approval number, such as EPA Worker PST 00001 and have a production or development date of 2016 or later. Trainers can find EPA-approved materials by visiting the following websites:

Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative:

pesticideresources.org/wps/inventory.html

Environmental Protection Agency:

epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety

Presentation

Pesticide safety training must be provided in a manner understood by the training attendees. The information must be presented either verbally from written materials or through audiovisual media. The person presenting the training must be a qualified trainer, but a translator can assist.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Weber, Arizona
Department of Agriculture

The WPS requires that the qualified trainer is available to answer questions and therefore must be present during the entire pesticide safety training, even when showing a pesticide safety video.

Finally, trainers must do their best to select a training site that is conducive to training and is reasonably free from distractions.

Training Records

Trainers should provide employers with a document that serves as a record of the WPS training. This document must include all of the following information

- the date of training,
- the employer's name,
- printed name and signature of the trained worker or handler,
- the trainer's name,
- documentation proving the trainer is qualified to provide the WPS worker or handler training,
- the type of training provided (worker or handler), and
- information about the EPA-approved materials used during the WPS training.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Weber, Arizona Department of Agriculture

The employer must keep a copy of this training record on file for two years following the date of the training. Employees that attended the training have the right to request a copy of the training record from the employer at any time within the two year timeframe.

