

Contents

Language Skills, Literacy Levels, and Educational Backgrounds . . . 222
Cultural Backgrounds 226
Knowledge About Pesticides and Workplace Experience 226
Personalities and Learning Styles 228
Generations 231
Attitudes About Safety 232
Additional Trainer Resources 236



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Training Scenario: It is 2007. You recently attended a very informative Worker Protection Standard (WPS) Train-the-Trainer Workshop and leave with a stack of books and a ton of ideas. A month after the class you receive a request to provide WPS training to 10 English- and Spanish-speaking pesticide handlers. You are nervous but excited to teach your very first pesticide safety class.

You purchase a 45-minute pesticide safety video that has all of the information required for WPS training. You also make 10 photocopies of a pesticide label so everyone will have a copy during a label reading activity.

You have studied the materials and feel well-prepared. The training class is going well and then it happens.

During your very first pesticide safety training

- two men answer three phone calls,
- one woman falls asleep while watching the video, and
- four people struggle through the pesticide label reading activity.

Fast forward ten years...

It is now 2017. You have 10 years of training experience and have taught 230 classes. You are confident, prepared, and still excited about training.

You begin each training session by asking everyone to silence their phones to avoid interruptions. You have reformatted your training so you don't rely on the video to do all of the teaching. In fact, you only show a 10-minute segment of an EPA-approved pesticide safety video that demonstrates how to safely transport, store, clean, and dispose of pesticide containers. You use other training methods to cover additional WPS information. Since many of the people you train speak either English or Spanish, you also make it a practice to provide training materials in both languages.

You feel experienced, knowledgeable and overly-prepared. The training class is going well and then it happens.

During your 231st training

- two women send ten text messages,
- one man falls asleep while watching the short video clip, and
- four people struggle through the pesticide label activity.

Unfortunately, this can be a reality for pesticide safety trainers. No matter how many years of experience or hours of preparation, trainers will encounter new situations.

Providing effective training classes can be a challenge, especially when you are working with a group of people from different generations and diverse

- language skills,
- literacy levels,
- educational backgrounds,
- cultural backgrounds,
- knowledge about pesticides,
- workplace experience,
- personalities,
- learning styles, and
- attitudes about safety

This chapter describes and addresses several situations pesticide safety educators might encounter during training. Each situation is presented in the form of a question followed by suggestions and solutions from experienced trainers. As you gain more experience as a pesticide safety trainer, you will be able to develop your own strategies for dealing with similar situations.

Language Skills, Literacy Levels, and Educational Backgrounds

Situation #1 – I've been asked to provide training in a language I don't speak very well. Where can I find a translator?

Trainer A – Some trainers use professional translators and others find translators through local agricultural associations, farmworker or refugee service providers, rural health clinics, regulatory agencies, schools or community-based organizations. Bilingual community members or an employee at the worksite might also be happy to assist you.

Trainer B – Call your local State Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Office or Tribal Authorities.

Trainer C - Sometimes, the ag-establishment may also have bilingual employees that can assist.

Trainer D – Be aware that not all immigrants have the same origin nor the same customs. In the case of immigrants working in agriculture, even though we talk about a community, it really includes people from diverse ethnic, social, and cultural origin, so, be sure the translator you pick understands about diversity.

Situation #2 – A community leader has offered to serve as my pesticide safety training translator. How will I know if he is translating the information correctly?

Trainer A – It will be very difficult for you to know if the leader is translating information correctly, especially if it is a language that you don't speak or understand. Invite the leader to attend a training you will present at a different site, prior to the one that he will help translate. Schedule a follow-up meeting, phone call, or e-mail exchange to answer any questions the leader might have about terminology or the regulation. Provide him with written materials he can use to study and translate before the training session.

Trainer B – I agree with **Trainer A** – however, this item should be part of the trainer preparation. Contacting a translator from a good source should be done well in advance.

Trainer C - If there is a great need for translation services in the language spoken by the community leader, ask him if he would like to attend a local pesticide safety train-the-trainer workshop so that he can serve as the pesticide safety trainer for people in his community.

Situation #3 – I have found lots of pesticide safety training resources available in English and Spanish. Where can I find resources in other languages?

Trainer A - The EPA has educational materials in languages other than Spanish. Many times when individuals from a specific ethnic group move into an area, community leaders that provide services to that group, or growers for whom they work or will work may help you locate resources in a specific language. If not, at the very least you will be able to document that such resources are unavailable, and there is a need to produce them.

Trainer B – Try your pesticide regulatory agency. The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) has pesticide safety resources in other languages. They translate their Pesticide Safety Information Series into Spanish, English and Punjabi (cdpr.ca.gov/docs/whs/psisenglish.htm). They also funded short videos on pesticide safety that they translated into Mixteco and Zapateco (youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgU4sA8HrUfpESWV6Mp4o690S-oQeXtxG). How about a community group? There are Mixteco organizations, for example, that would probably be willing to help translate. Note: the challenge is that it's a non-written language.

Situation #4 – There are usually one or two people in my training classes that don't participate in activities that involve reading. I don't want to embarrass them or put them on the spot, but I am worried that they might miss out on important information. How will I know if they understand the information?

Trainer A – When working with small groups, go around and participate with each group for a little bit, answering any questions or concerns and facilitating them to keep on task.

Trainer B –

1. Make sure written materials are explained verbally and have illustrations that can help them understand the information.
2. Ask questions to ensure all participants understand the information.

Trainer C – If you plan to use written materials or activities that require participants to read, divide the participants into small groups of 3 or 4 people and ask each person to take a different role. For example, one person can read a section of the label, another person can select the PPE that is required for mixing the pesticide, a third person can put on the appropriate PPE, and a fourth person can describe the PPE that was selected. This allows you to combine the activity with hands-on practice or skill demonstrations, which makes training more enjoyable. It also enables each person in the group to participate and show that they understand the information. This technique takes the pressure off of the people who do not have strong reading skills.

Trainer D – Remind them that it is their employer's responsibility to ensure the handler has read, or someone has explained to them, the parts of the label on safe use of the pesticide, entry restrictions, AEZs and REIs. If they are unable to read or understand the label, they should ask their employer for directions.

Situation #5 – I provide pesticide safety training services for hire and don't work at the farms where I teach. How can I help pesticide handlers who are not able to read a pesticide label, since they need to follow it each time they use a pesticide?

Trainer A –

1. Use examples of pesticide labels and help them find key information regarding safety so that they can protect themselves.
2. Pesticide handler supervisors/employers are required to provide label information to employees before they start handling pesticides.

Trainer B – You can match pesticide handlers who have limited reading skills with coworkers who can assist them. During training, explain to everyone that the pesticide label is a very important document that must be followed because it contains safety, health

and use information. Ask if there is anyone in the group who would be willing and available to serve as a resource for coworkers who are not able to read the label. Ask if there are any bilingual pesticide handlers who can also serve as translators for people who are unable to read the label, which is often available only in English. If pesticide handlers would benefit from a bilingual English/Spanish pesticide label terminology list, they can find one on the Arizona Department of Agriculture's website: agriculture.az.gov/sites/default/files/labelvocabpamphlet.pdf

Trainer C – An alternative is to ask class participants to highlight or circle the most important places where they will find information that they have to know before they apply pesticides.

Situation #6 – I am working with a group of trainers that would like to design pesticide safety training materials. Someone told me to make sure that all reading materials are written at a third grade reading level. Another person said a seventh grade reading level was best. Which person is correct?

Trainer A – I have heard similar advice and am not certain which level is the correct level for adults with limited reading skills or formal education. However, despite the level you choose, please remember that the final product will be used by adults. Some groups have developed comic books, or novelas, which have proven to be a very popular and fun way to learn about pesticide safety. The most effective illustrations are those that depict real-life situations adults may encounter at their worksites or in their homes.

Trainer B – Make sure reading materials not only convey information in the appropriate language, but that the visuals and the examples portray people from that community so that the participants can personally relate to the information.

Trainer C – Role play and hands-on activities will also work well in those situations, although time constraints should be taken into consideration.

Cultural Backgrounds

Situation #1: What if you are called to provide training to agricultural employees and you learn that in their country of origin, agricultural work is thought of as an activity performed by strong individuals, who are not afraid of pesticides. People they know, or even themselves, have always worked with pesticides without getting sick or injured. You also learn that in their view, getting injured by pesticides only happens to weak individuals who should not be working in agriculture in the first place. What can a trainer do in this situation?

Trainer A – Culture plays an important role in how people view, respond, or perceive pesticide safety. In many cases, agricultural employees come from a country or culture where pesticide safety training may not be viewed as a priority, is not provided regularly as a health measure, or it is not required by a rule or regulation. It is important for trainers to identify the cultural background of the agricultural employees in the audience in order to effectively get the message of pesticide safety and pesticide exposure prevention across to them.

Trainer B – Make sure everyone understands how pesticides, specifically insecticides, are designed to kill insects. Explain that insecticides attack parts of the insect's body or organism that are also present in humans. Explain that this is why it is important for us to be careful when working around pesticides and that pesticide injury can happen to anyone, even to strong individuals.

Knowledge About Pesticides and Workplace Experience

Situation #1 – Most agricultural employers want all of their employees to go through WPS training together. I know that many of the older foremen and supervisors have already gone through several classes and have a lot of experience working with pesticides. Do you have any tips on how to train a group with mixed knowledge and experience? I want to make sure that new employees get all of the necessary information, but I don't want the class to be too easy or boring for the employees who have been around for a few years.

Trainer A – Before the training (during the registration process), we ask attendees how long they have worked around pesticides. We divide all attendees into groups according to experience, purposely putting people with more experience into groups with those who have less experience. When it's a mixed training, we split people who work at the same place into different groups (unless there are so many from one organization that there is more than one per group). If I notice that one group or person seems to have more knowledge or experience, I assign them activities that are more detailed or difficult. For example, I would assign them a presentation on spill cleanup rather than proper pesticide storage, because it requires a more detailed response.

Trainer B – Ask the more experienced employees to assist with some of the activities so they have an opportunity to share their experience. In the process, the older employees will get to show off their knowledge and the newer employees get to see that their supervisors are a great resource should they have questions in the future.

Trainer C – Provide all the required WPS information. If there are people in the group with a lot of experience and knowledge, ask them to participate by complementing/providing information on how it applies to their particular situation at their worksite. Additionally, ask those with experience to share some of their experience in reference to the information being provided.

Trainer D – Also be aware that in some workplaces there can be issues among workers that might arise during training. Sometimes issues might be sparked by inviting more experienced workers or supervisors to offer their knowledge, especially when hierarchies are involved, which can prevent new workers from engaging in the learning experience.

In addition, you also can invite those with less experience to ask what they would like to know or better understand.

Personalities and Learning Styles

Situation #1 – It never fails that at least one person falls asleep or stares off into space during training. Does anyone else have a problem with sleepy people? How can I keep everyone awake and alert during the training?

Trainer A – It is very important that everyone receives the information, but sleepy people are a reality in agriculture. You may find out that the drowsiest person is the night irrigator, a parent of a newborn, or has been up since 4:00 a.m. There are so many factors that you can't control, so try not to take it personally. Of course if everyone in your training is sound asleep, you may want to revisit your training methods. Include several activities that require people to work in small groups. You can also ask the sleepest people to participate in activities that require them to stand up or move around. This will help them to stay alert during the class.

Trainer B – Use interactive training methods such as hands-on or group discussion – they work very well to maintain people's interest.

Situation #2 – Do you have any suggestions on how to work with people who are so enthusiastic about the training that they dominate the discussions and don't allow others a chance to ask or answer questions?

Trainer A – As a trainer, you want to encourage everyone in the group to participate. However, occasionally there will be one or more people in the class who are so eager to participate that other people do not have a chance to get involved in the discussion. Most likely, the enthusiastic person just really enjoys learning, participating in activities, and assisting instructors in the teaching process. It is also possible that the person feels bad that other people are not participating in the training and doesn't want you to feel uncomfortable by the silence. Since the enthusiastic person means well, use their energy to your advantage and get them involved in the teaching process.

Trainer B – Invite them to help train and to volunteer on different task – use their enthusiasm in a positive way.

Trainer C – I try to find a way to capitalize on their knowledge and enthusiasm. I sometimes do this by asking the enthusiastic person to give a summary of a concept instead of having to explain it myself. I ask a question like, “I know you have a lot of experience with respirators. Can you explain the difference between a filtering facepiece and a pre-filter?” It saves my voice!

Trainer D – Another idea to take into consideration is the arrangement of the class seating. Having people sitting in an old school style classroom, with the professor in front, sometimes facilitates those who are shy to hide and for those who are outspoken to take over the conversation. Having a U shape arrangement, or a circle, helps to have everyone face each other, which makes it easier to facilitate the participation of each person. Finally, it is the trainer’s responsibility to make eye contact with everyone and keep everyone’s attention on the subject matter and the group.

Trainer E – There are methods you can use that will give others an opportunity to speak and participate in the activities. One solution is to compliment the individual for bringing up excellent points and mention that it would be interesting to hear what others in the group have to say about these comments, too. By inviting others to participate, you open the discussion to the whole group while responding to the enthusiastic individual. You may even try to give the enthusiastic person the job of engaging the other participants by asking something like, “Thank you for all of your great ideas and for eagerly participating. Will you please select three people to volunteer for our next hands-on activity?”

Situation #3 – What is the most appropriate way to respond to someone who disrupts class by trying to prove he knows more than the trainer?

Trainer A - Initially, you can address the behavior, acknowledging if you've said something incorrect or uncertain of the answer, or letting the person know the comment is off topic. You could try saying something like, "That's really good additional information for those of you in charge of [fill in the blank], but it's not something we need to address in this class." If the taunting persists, I would not show a reaction and basically act like the person didn't say anything. If he/she says something insightful or gives a good answer, then I would give a lot of praise for it. I would try to give positive attention to other trainees and not give the taunter negative attention.

Trainer B – You may come across a person who tries to disrupt the class by verbally attacking or criticizing you. It may take the form of an attack on the accuracy of your information or the person may constantly interrupt you with inappropriate or unrelated comments. The first thing to remember in this situation is to keep your temper under control and be polite, no matter how unpleasant or rude a trainee's behavior. Remind him or her that if you are unable to complete training, the rest of the trainees will not get the information that could protect their health or even save lives. When you do this, other people may provide the peer pressure needed to restrain their coworker from acting out during training.

Trainer C – If nothing seems to be working with the individual's behavior, wait for a break to talk to them after class but not in front of the group. You might also have to, as a final resort, ask the individual to leave class.

Situation #4 – I took classes on adult education and learned that people have different learning styles and preferences. How can I set up training so that everyone can learn the same information at the same time?

Trainer A – Educational research is very interesting and it is true that most of the time you will have a group consisting of people who prefer to learn in different ways. A few people might find it easy to learn simply by listening to a lecture. Other people remember most of the information that they see and hear during a video. Some people like to analyze situations and come up with ideal solutions, while others prefer to practice a task during a hands-on activity. If possible, combine different training methods or use a few that allow trainees to simultaneously hear information, see examples, solve problems, and practice skills.

Generations

Situation #1 – Is it my imagination or is the younger generation much shyer than we were back in the day? They clam up when I ask them questions and don't want to participate in anything that requires them to stand up in front of a group of people. How can I make them feel comfortable enough in a training environment to want to participate in activities?

Trainer A – You bring up a good point. It is possible that the younger generation feels more comfortable communicating through social media than they do in real-life social situations, such as during a pesticide safety training. If you find over time that the majority of the younger people you train are apprehensive about standing in front of a large group, don't force the issue. Instead, set aside some time to ask a few of your younger trainees how they learn best. You may find that high school teachers and college professors have created some very innovative ways to educate the younger generation. Some of these methods might transfer nicely into a pesticide safety training.

Trainer B - Use training methods that involve different learning styles. One of the methods may click for them.

Trainer C – I think the resistance to opening up and participating may be related to not really knowing who is in the room with them. A lot of the trainings and large group meetings I have been to have started out with an ice breaker before the presentation. I know some of them are lame or corny, but it usually loosens people up!

Situation #2 – *I recently graduated from college and will eventually take over my family's farm. One of our mechanics has been working with my family for 45 years and has known me since I was a kid. I've tried to convince him that he needs to be careful when he works with the application equipment because it could have pesticide residues on it. He insists that if something were going to happen to him, it would have happened already. He thinks my generation is too paranoid and that we would be a lot healthier if we got our hands dirty every once in a while. How can I convince him to take my pesticide safety advice seriously when he still sees me as a little kid?*

Trainer A – Talk to him about consequences and the possibilities of pesticides having greater effects on his health now that he is older.

Trainer B – Get your hands dirty with him and offer some examples of real life stories, photos, while you are working alongside him.

Attitudes About Safety

Situation #1 – *An employer asked me for advice. One of the pesticide handlers at his farm refuses to wear the required respirator even though he has completed the respirator medical evaluation questionnaire; attended respirator use, maintenance, and care training; and has a respirator that fits him. What can the employer do to make sure the handler follows the label and wears the required equipment?*

Trainer A

- Have a safety protocol/policy in place and ensure all employees are aware of it, and explain the consequences of not following the protocol.
- Enforce protocol/policy
- Apply corrective measures

Trainer B – This is a common question in warmer states. Pesticide handlers complain about wearing PPE when it is hot and humid outside. Adjusting work schedules to cooler hours is one solution, however some people may still complain that the PPE is uncomfortable. If a pesticide handler is provided with PPE that fits but refuses to wear it even though they have been trained on the importance of following the label and protecting themselves from pesticide exposure, the employer may have to draw up a contract stating that all employees must agree to wear the label-required PPE or risk termination.

Situation #2 – *I taught a WPS course to a group of about 40 agricultural workers the other day. About 15 minutes into the class, I caught a man playing a video game on his phone. He laughed when I caught him and said he didn't need training because he won't be using pesticides. His comment and attitude surprised me and I didn't know how to respond. If something like this happens again, what should I tell him? I am worried that if he has a pesticide incident at work, I will be held liable since I was the pesticide safety trainer. Can I be held liable?*

Trainer A – To answer the question about if the trainer is liable – no. It is the agricultural employer's responsibility to ensure workers are trained, and it is the trainer's responsibility to provide training in a manner the trainee understands, answer all questions, and cover all training topics. It is the employees' responsibility to use the information given in training to protect himself. If the trainer feels comfortable, he could tell the employer/supervisor about the interaction so he knows the employee likely didn't get the information.

As for the trainee – I wonder if you could use peer pressure. Ask the audience how they would feel if they heard their son or daughter (or mom or dad, or uncle, or...) give the same response. Ask what they would say to convince that person that they are exposed to pesticides even if they aren't handling pesticides, and to explain that their health and safety matters to the rest of the family.

Trainer B

1. Explain to the person that even though he won't be using pesticides, he may enter into areas that have been treated with pesticides and that pesticide residues may still cause him and his family harm.
2. Tell him it is a requirement as part of his employment in agriculture.

Situation #3 – My employer just hired an employee who will be responsible for coordinating the workplace safety program for all harvesting crews. She seems overwhelmed with all of the programs and paperwork that we need to complete at the beginning of harvest season and has told us that we are only allowed to spend 15 minutes on pesticide safety training. I don't think this is enough time for me to cover everything that is required in the new Worker Protection Standard. Is there a minimum amount of time required for agricultural worker training? If not, how much time do you think we should spend training?

Trainer A – This is a really good question. The Environmental Protection Agency has not set a minimum amount of time for WPS training, however you are required to present it in a manner and language that attendees understand and allow time for trainees to ask questions. Some trainers show a pesticide safety video while agricultural workers are being transported to the field. However, several have mentioned that they worry about people being able to see or hear the video. If you have doubts about the effectiveness of a 15-minute pesticide safety training class, talk to your employer about your concerns. Print off a copy of the points that must be included and your ideas for the presentation. You can also put together a lesson plan, such as the one provided in the training preparation chapter. This will allow you to show your employer your ideas and the amount of time that you feel is sufficient for the training. Don't forget to add extra time to complete a training sign-in sheet.

Situation #4 – What can I do when trainees tell me that their employer is not following the WPS regulations? They would like me to do something about it but in a way that won't get them in trouble.

Trainer A - If trainees have concerns about their workplace conditions or their employers' compliance with the WPS, be supportive by listening to their concerns. As appropriate, encourage them to discuss their concerns with their employers, appropriate regulatory agencies, or farmworker-oriented social service agencies. Keep in mind that agricultural workers may have concerns about possible employer retaliation. Remain neutral and avoid expressing personal opinions you may have about a particular situation. It is also possible that the employer's only knowledge about the WPS is that his or her employees must be trained. If you feel comfortable doing so, invite the employer to a pesticide safety training session. You can also offer the employer a "compliance assistance" visit to discuss any WPS requirements that might be new to the employer. Bring along an extra copy of the How to Comply Manual and other materials to leave with the employer.

Trainer B – Remind them that the contact information for the regulatory agency is listed at the central posting information site. They can contact the agency to explain the situation and their concerns. Many agencies allow the caller to remain anonymous.

Trainer C - Encourage them to talk to their supervisor about their concerns and if things do not change, provide participants with contact information of local authorities to address their concerns.

Additional Trainer Resources***Situation #4 – Who can I contact if I have questions or need resources for workers, handlers, or their employers?***

The following is a list of organizations and websites that may be helpful.

1. State pesticide regulatory agencies

npic.orst.edu/reg/state_agencies.html

2. Tribal pesticide regulatory agencies

npic.orst.edu/reg/tribes.html

3. University Cooperative Extension Pesticide Safety Education Program

npic.orst.edu/pest/countyext.htm

4. American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators (AAPSE)

aapse.ext.vt.edu

5. Federal and Regional Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

npic.orst.edu/epamlr.html

6. Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (PERC)

pesticideresources.org

7. Migrant clinician's network, or similar organizations

migrantclinician.org

8. Farmworker organizations or associations

afop.org

9. State Contacts for Health Departments

npic.orst.edu/shemlr.html

10. State Contacts for Information about the Worker Protection Standard in Agriculture & Forestry

npic.orst.edu/wpsmlr.html

The following is a list of additional agencies or organizations that may be able to provide information and services.

1. State agencies that regulate Farm Labor Contractors
2. Rural health clinics
3. Social service agencies, which might provide services to farmworkers and their families

Trainers can find WPS training materials and supplemental pesticide safety and use information through the following websites.

1. PERC WPS Inventory of Training Resources

www.pesticideresources.org/wps/inventory.html

2. EPA Safety Information Related to the Worker Protection Standard

epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety

3. National Pesticide Information Center

npic.orst.edu

4. National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Manual, 2014

Note: This manual does not include WPS-specific information. However, it is a good resource for trainers who would like additional information about pesticide safety.

nasda.org/9381/Foundation/11379/11383/30485.aspx

