

8 - Pesticides: Safety Training

EH&S – MGA

Goals: This safety session should teach you to:

- A. Understand the potential hazards of exposure to pesticides.
- B. Recognize the symptoms of pesticide poisoning.
- C. Know how to protect themselves from pesticide exposure and/or poisoning.

OSHA Regulations: 29 CFR 1910.1200, OSHA’s Hazard Communication Standard. Agricultural workers also get protection from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Worker Protection Standard (40 CFR Part 170).

1. Health Hazards Associated with Pesticide Exposure

- A. Pesticides are toxic (that is, poisonous) and can cause a wide range of health problems.
 - 1. Symptoms can be acute (they show up after one exposure) or chronic (they develop after repeated exposure).
- B. Mild cases of pesticide poisoning may result in headache, nausea, skin irritation, and dizziness.
- C. More severe pesticide poisoning can cause fever, convulsions, loss of consciousness, and even death.
- D. Pesticide exposure can occur through eye or skin contact, respiratory contact (inhaling), or ingestion (swallowing).

2. Restrictions Reducing Exposure to Pesticides

- A. Contact restrictions, such as PPE to protect people applying pesticides.
- B. Entry restrictions—prevent people from entering areas where pesticides have been applied.
- C. Monitoring restrictions—visual or voice contact with person when applying pesticides or in high-exposure situations.

3. Labeling of Pesticides

- A. Always read the label (or SDS) carefully. It contains the common name of the chemical, warnings, physical and health hazards, first-aid instructions, proper handling and storage procedures, required PPE, and the name, address, and phone number of the manufacturer.

4. General Safety Rules that Apply to Pesticide Use

- A. Be especially careful of pesticides you can’t see—on plants, in water, dust, etc.
- B. Wash immediately if pesticides have been spilled or sprayed on you, and always before eating, drinking, or using tobacco.
- C. Wear appropriate PPE or other clothing to protect you against exposure—long sleeves, hat, etc. Keep work clothes separate from other clothes.
- D. Stay out of restricted areas.
- E. Never take pesticides or pesticide containers home with you.

5. Appropriate PPE for Pesticide Exposure

- A. Proper PPE depends on how toxic the pesticide is, the type of job to be done, means of entry to the body, and other precautions being taken.
- B. The label or SDS should tell you what kind of PPE you should use, such as:
 - 1. Coveralls
 - 2. Rubber gloves
 - 3. Protective footwear
 - 4. Aprons
 - 5. Headgear (hood or hat)
 - 6. Respiratory protection
 - 7. Protective eyewear (goggles, face shield, etc.)

6. Personal Hygiene When Working with Pesticides

- A. Washing up should be routine after working with or near pesticides—it's one of the best ways to protect oneself.
 - 1. Agricultural establishments will have a decontamination site for washing.
 - 2. All exposed areas should be washed with soap and water; a towel should be used to dry off, and then the towel should be cleaned properly or disposed of properly.
 - 3. Pesticide residue should be avoided by washing thoroughly and putting on clean clothes after work.

7. Emergency Procedures for Pesticide Poisoning

- A. If exposed to pesticides, the employee should go to the decontamination site immediately; these procedures should be followed:
 - 1. Wash all exposed areas with soap and water; use eyewash for 15 minutes if necessary.
 - 2. Act fast—summon medical attention immediately.
 - 3. Be prepared to give medical personnel as much information as possible.
 - 4. Read the label or SDS to access first-aid procedures and other medical information.

Summation: Pesticides can be deadly

Take the time to wear necessary PPE and follow all safety precautions.