

Personal Protective Equipment—Pesticides

Applying pesticides requires special skills and responsibilities. Everyone who applies pesticides, or supervises pesticide applicators, must ensure the chemicals are handled properly and safely.

Anyone who works with pesticides--chemicals that control undesirable plants, animals and insects--can face a risk. Even if you don't work with pesticides, your exposure to them can pose a risk if you work in areas where they have been used. Pesticides can enter the body through the nose, mouth, skin, and eyes.

TRUE STORY

An experienced pesticide applicator was applying a restricted insecticide in a peach orchard. The orchard's owner provided all the personal protective equipment to the applicator, in accordance with the pesticide's label instructions.

The applicator changed the respirator cartridges every four hours, per the supervisor's instructions. But when changing the cartridges, the applicator failed to remove his rubber gloves. The gloves were contaminated with pesticide and it passed to the inner side of the respirator's face-piece and cartridges.

The applicator grew ill. Using the CB radio in the truck, the applicator called for help. He was rushed to the hospital and treated for pesticide poisoning.

What could have prevented this accident?

- Train applicators in the use and care of personal protective equipment.
- Help applicators remove and change respirator cartridges.

Proper Care and Handling of Pesticides

- Proper work procedures, including the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), prevent pesticide-related illnesses. Appropriate PPE varies; it's based on the kind of pesticides used, the application method, and workplace conditions.
- Personal protective equipment can include coveralls, long-sleeve shirts and pants, chemical-resistant boots, aprons, hats, gloves, goggles, face shields, and respirators.
- Pesticide labels contain information that ensures safe use, such as the specific PPE to use. Follow all instructions on the label.

EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer:

- Identify the required PPE for each pesticide use.
- Purchase and issue PPE to employees.
- Develop pesticide-safe work procedures and training policies.
- Communicate supervisors' responsibilities and accountability for monitoring and enforcing compliance with all PPE policies.

Employee:

- Read the label and follow your employer's PPE policies when working with any pesticide.
- Inform your supervisor immediately if you don't have the required PPE, or your PPE is defective.
- Always use personal protective equipment. It could save your life!
- Ask your supervisor immediately if you have a safety question.

Zenith provides workplace safety resources at: **TheZenith.com**[®]