

# FELS

Farm Employers Labor Service



Serving Agriculture in Labor Management Relations

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## Pesticide Training Requirements for Agricultural Workers and Handlers

The federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Worker Protection Standard (WPS) and the state Department of Pesticide Regulations (DPR) Worker Safety regulations requires employers to provide workers with pesticide safety training. These covered workers include agricultural workers (conducting hand labor in the production of agricultural plants) and pesticide handlers (people mixing, loading, or applying pesticides or doing other tasks involving direct contact with pesticides).

The training of agricultural workers and handlers may only be conducted by specified trainers. See "**Types of Trainers**" below.

The training must assure that a worker receives basic pesticide safety information before they enter a treated area on the establishment or begin handling pesticides as an applicator. The agricultural employer must assure the information is communicated to agricultural workers in a manner they can understand.

The basic pesticide safety information must include the following concepts:

- Pesticides may be on or in plants, soil, irrigation water, or drifting from nearby applications.
- Prevent pesticides from entering your body by:
- Following directions and/or signs about keeping out of treated or restricted areas
- Washing before eating, drinking, using chewing gum or tobacco, or using the toilet
- Wearing work clothing that protects the body from pesticide residues
- Washing/showering with soap and water, shampoo hair and put on clean clothes after work
- Washing work clothes separately from other clothes before wearing them again
- Washing immediately in the nearest clean water if pesticides are spilled or sprayed on the body and, as soon as possible, showering, shampooing, and changing into clean clothes
- Further training will be provided within 5 days

For handlers, the training shall cover, for each pesticide or chemically similar group of pesticides, to be used:

- Format and meaning of information, such as precautionary statements about human health hazards, contained in pesticide product labeling;
- Hazards of pesticides, including acute and chronic effects, delayed effects, and sensitization, as identified in pesticide product labeling, Material Safety Data Sheets, or Pesticide Safety Information Series leaflets;
- Routes by which pesticides can enter the body;
- Signs and symptoms of overexposure;
- Emergency first aid for pesticide overexposure;
- How to obtain emergency medical care;
- Routine and emergency decontamination procedures, including spill clean up and the need to thoroughly shower with soap and warm water after the exposure period;
- Need for, limitations, appropriate use, and sanitation, of, any required personal protective equipment;
- Prevention, recognition, and first aid for heat-related illness;
- Safety requirements and procedures, including engineering controls (such as closed systems and enclosed cabs) for handling, transporting, storing, and disposing of pesticides;
- Environmental concerns such as drift, runoff, and wildlife hazards;
- Warnings about taking pesticides or pesticide containers home;
- Requirements of this chapter and chapter 4 relating to pesticide safety, Material Safety Data Sheets, and Pesticide Safety Information Series leaflets;
- The purposes and requirements for medical supervision if organophosphate or carbamate pesticides with the signal word "DANGER" or "WARNING" on the labeling are mixed, loaded, or applied for the commercial or research production of an agricultural plant commodity;
- The location of the written Hazard Communication Information For Employees Handling Pesticides (Pesticide Safety Information Series leaflet A-8), other Pesticide Safety Information Series leaflets, and Material Safety Data Sheets;
- The employee's rights, including the right.

## Types of Trainers

There are two levels of pesticide trainers. These are:

**Level One:** Trainers of agricultural workers and pesticide handlers:

- **Agricultural workers:** Training of agricultural workers can be performed by:
  - (1) A California certified applicator;
  - (2) A person holding any other valid license or certificate of personal pesticide qualification issued by the department;
  - (3) A person who has completed an "instructor training" program presented by one of the following:
    - (A) The University of California, Integrated Pest Management Program, after January 1, 1993;
    - (B) Other instructor training program approved by the director.
  - (4) A California Registered Professional Forester;
  - (5) A person holding a valid County Biologist License in Pesticide Regulation or Investigation and Environmental Monitoring issued by the California Department of Food and Agriculture;
  - (6) A farm adviser employed by the University of California Extension Office; or
  - (7) Other valid trainer qualification approved by the director.
- **Pesticide handlers:** Training of pesticide handlers can be performed by:
  - (1) A California certified commercial applicator;
  - (2) A California certified private applicator;
  - (3) A person holding a valid County Biologist License in Pesticide Regulation or Investigation and Environmental Monitoring issued by the Department of Food and Agriculture;
  - (4) A farm advisor employed by the University of California Extension Office;
  - (5) A person who has completed an "instructor trainer" program presented by one of the following:
    - (A) the University of California, Integrated Pest Management Program after January 1, 1993; or
    - (B) other instructor training program approved by the Director;
  - (6) A California licensed Agricultural Pest Control Adviser;
  - (7) A California Registered Professional Forester; or
  - (8) Other trainer qualification approved by the Director.

**Level Two:** Trainers of **Pesticide Instructors** for agricultural workers and pesticide handlers (Referred to as "Train-the-Trainer (T2) Programs to Qualify Trainers of Pesticide Handlers and Field Workers; Programs Approved by the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR)" see: <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/license/trainers.htm>):

## What is Pesticide Instructor Training?

Agricultural employers must train in pesticide safety employees who handle (mix, load or apply) pesticides or who enter pesticide-treated areas. The instruction can be conducted only by certain qualified persons (see list of **Level One** trainers above). If a person doesn't qualify as an agricultural worker or pesticide handler trainer as noted above, the person can become a **Level One** trainer by completing an "instructor trainer" program authorized by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR).

Farm Employers Labor Service (FELS) can conduct Pesticide Instructor Training seminars, as it is authorized by the DPR to conduct. There are two Pesticide Instructor Training courses conducted by FELS. These courses are (1) Pesticide Instructor Training for Agricultural Workers and (2) Pesticide Instructor Training for Agricultural Workers and Handlers.

After completing the first course (Agricultural Worker), participants are authorized to issue the EPA worker training verification card ("Blue Card") to agricultural workers they have instructed in pesticide safety.

After completing the second course (Agricultural Worker and Handler), participants are not only authorized to issue the EPA worker training verification card ("Blue Card") to agricultural workers they are also authorized to train pesticide handlers.

The Agricultural Worker seminar is an approximately 4-hour course whereas the Handler course is an approximately 6-hour course.

Both courses included a certificate of completion and a FELS Pesticide Train the Trainer Instructor's Manual.

**Pesticide Instructor Trainer Qualification Checklist**

Department of Pesticide Regulations (DPR) Licensing and Certification Program authorizes Pesticide Programs and Instructors (i.e. T- 3 Programs). Here is a summary of the criteria used to evaluate T-3 instructors:

- ❑ Indication of instructor's training qualifications.
  1. Persons possessing an instructor certification from a recognized institution may satisfy this criteria. Such as an American Red Cross CPR/First-Aid Instructor Certificate.
  2. In addition to the certification the candidate should demonstrate field training experience of Agricultural Workers/Handlers (evidenced by training logs by instructor candidate), etc.
- ❑ Indication of instructor's pesticide safety knowledge. Persons possessing one of the following qualifications could satisfy this criteria:
  1. A California certified commercial applicator;
  2. A California certified private applicator;
  3. A person holding a valid County Biologist License in Pesticide Regulation or Investigation and Environmental Monitoring issued by the Department of Food and Agriculture;
  4. A farm advisor employed by the University of California Extension Office;
  5. A person who has completed an "instructor trainer" program presented by one of the following:
    - A. the University of California, Integrated Pest Management Program after January 1, 1993; or
    - B. other instructor training program approved by the Director;
  6. A California licensed Agricultural Pest Control Adviser;
  7. A California Registered Professional Forester; or
  8. Other trainer qualification approved by the Director.