



Information

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Health Care Providers' Access to Pesticide Information

Pesticide Information Leaflet No. 31

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June 1999

Background

Certain laws and regulations ensure that health care providers must have access to pesticide information. The Worker Protection Standard and the Pesticide Recordkeeping requirements of the 1990 Farm Bill both address this issue.

The Worker Protection Standard

In 1992 the U.S. EPA issued a comprehensive set of criteria called the Worker Protection Standard (WPS). This regulation applies to farms, forests, nurseries, greenhouses, and related structures. It covers pesticide applicators, mixer/loaders, and persons who may be exposed to pesticide residues on the job in these operations.

Persons provided protection under the Standard fall into two categories. A pesticide *handler* is a commercial applicator, crop advisor, or a person who works for salary, wages, or other compensation and who handles pesticides. Handlers include people who mix, load, or handle open pesticide containers; apply pesticides; incorporate soil-applied pesticides; work on pesticide application equipment; act as a flagger, or work as a scout on treated fields or sites. An agricultural *worker* is defined as a person who works for salary, wages, or other compensation and who must enter a field or area treated within the past 30 days to perform tasks such as harvesting, weeding, cultivating, watering, pruning, etc. related to the production of an agricultural plant.

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The WPS requires employers to offer the following protections to their employees. Information about pesticide applications, including an application list, emergency information, and a pesticide safety poster must be posted at a central location, and oral warnings about pesticide applications as well as on-site posting are required for some products. Decontamination sites must be made available. For both handlers and workers, the decontamination site must provide soap, towels, and clean water. For handlers, the site must additionally provide water for washing the entire body, a clean change of clothes, and emergency eye flushing water. Employers must also provide emergency assistance in the form of product information and transportation to a treatment site (clinic, hospital, etc.). Both handlers and workers must receive pesticide safety training within a specified period of time in a language they can understand. EPA-developed and/or approved training materials are available for training. Employees must also have access to product-specific information. Certain personal protective equipment (PPE) must be made available to handlers and certain workers, and restricted entry intervals, during which no one except properly trained and clad individuals are allowed back into a treated site, must be observed.

Pesticide Recordkeeping Requirements

Under the provisions of the 1990 Farm Bill, certified private and commercial applicators must maintain records of all pesticides they apply. Some state laws and regulations broaden these requirements. In

Maryland, certified applicators (both private and commercial) must keep records on general use as well as restricted use pesticides.

Private applicators in Maryland must record the following information: EPA registration number; product name (either brand name or common name); date of application; location and size of the area treated; crop, site, or commodity treated; amount applied; application rate; name and address of the certified applicator who made or supervised the treatment; and name of the applicator, if different from the certified applicator. Maryland commercial applicators must record the following: EPA registration number; common name of the pesticide used; date of application; location and size of the area treated; name of owner or tenant of treated property; name of the applicator who made the treatment; target pest; crop, site, or commodity treated; amount applied; application rate; concentration of the pesticide used; type of equipment used; time of day of application; and weather conditions, including wind direction and estimated velocity.

This is a record *keeping* requirement, not a record *reporting* requirement. Access to records is granted only through the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, the state lead agency for pesticide regulation (in Maryland, the Maryland Department of Agriculture), or a health professional. The records must be maintained for a period of two years after application and must be made available upon request to MDA representatives.