

# Work Safely with Pesticides

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

## KEY POINTS:

- Read and follow all instructions on the pesticide label.
- Always wear personal protective equipment.
- Wash your hands with [soap](#) and water each time you remove your gloves to take a break.

*Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.*

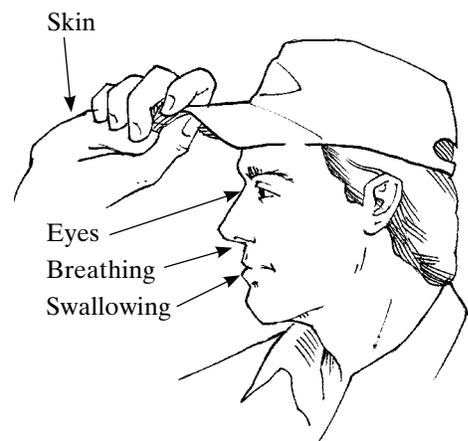
## Pesticides can be harmful

- Pesticides are an effective way to kill pests on plants and crops.
- But it's important to take extra care when working with pesticides to avoid injury.
- Some pesticides are highly toxic. Exposure to very small amounts of concentrated pesticides can cause chemical burns, blindness, injury to the lungs, or even death.
- You **can** work safely with pesticides. But that means:
  - not getting pesticides on your skin
  - not swallowing pesticides or allowing them to contact any food
  - not getting pesticides in your eyes
  - not breathing pesticide vapors

## How to avoid pesticide exposure

1. Be very careful when you are handling pesticides. Don't take shortcuts, and don't be in a big hurry.
2. Carefully read the label before opening a pesticide container. The label includes such information as which personal protective equipment to wear and what to do if you are accidentally exposed. Be sure to read the safety precautions. If a label is missing or you are unable to read or understand a label, ask your supervisor for help. See the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for additional information.
3. Always wear at least the amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) specified on the label. Depending on the toxicity of the pesticide, you may need to wear a [respirator](#), [protective eyewear](#), [chemical-resistant gloves](#), an [apron](#) or a [coverall](#).

*Note to trainer: Tell employees where to find the PPE you provide in your operation.*



**Routes of pesticide exposure**



*(Continued on back)*

See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

## Work Safely with Pesticides

### Important pesticide safety tips

- Make sure animals and other people are out of the area.
- Mix and load pesticides at a slow, steady pace.
- Obey all pesticide warning signs and verbal warnings.
- Wash the outside of your gloves before removing them. Wash your hands and face before you eat, drink, smoke, chew gum, use the toilet or put on makeup.
- Never rub your eyes or touch your face or bare skin with contaminated gloves or clothing.
- Never re-wear pesticide-contaminated clothing.
- Keep all PPE clean and in good operating condition. Follow your supervisor's cleaning instructions. Always wash contaminated clothing separately from other laundry.
- Store protective equipment carefully in a place where it will not become contaminated before it is worn again.
- Take a shower and change into clean clothes before you go home. Thoroughly wash your body and your hair with soap and water.



### If you are accidentally exposed

- Immediately stop working if you are splashed or sprayed with a pesticide, if you have trouble breathing, or if you feel dizzy or otherwise ill.
- Call for help, and get out of the pesticide-treated area if you can. Have someone notify your supervisor.
- If a pesticide spills or splashes on you, immediately remove your contaminated clothing and PPE, then thoroughly wash your skin with soap and water.
- If a pesticide gets in your eyes, immediately rinse them with an [eye flush kit](#) or let a gentle stream of water flow across them. Hold your eyelids open and rinse your eyes for 15 minutes.
- Get medical help as soon as possible.



### Are there any questions?

*Note to trainer:* Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the **Pesticide Safety Do's and Don'ts**.

### PESTICIDE SAFETY DO'S AND DON'TS

#### DO:

- Keep personal clothing, food, drinks, gum, cigarettes and other belongings away from pesticides.
- Always use PPE when handling pesticides.
- Avoid using the telephone or sitting in a chair when you are wearing pesticide-contaminated clothing.

#### DON'T:

- Take pesticides or empty pesticide containers home.
- Wear leather or canvas shoes, or leather or fabric gloves when working with pesticides.
- Take off your gloves or other PPE while you are working with pesticides.

See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.