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EPA Announces Final Revisions to Worker Protection Standard Regulations

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EPA Announces Final Revisions to Worker Protection Standard Regulations

Abstract

On September 28, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the final revisions to the 1992 Agricultural Worker Protection Standard (WPS) regulation, which is designed to protect employees working on agricultural establishments from exposure to agricultural pesticides, both general and restricted use. The WPS must be followed when pesticide use is part of the production of agricultural plants on a farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse. The WPS does not apply when pesticides are used on pastures, to control rodents, as bait in traps, on harvested plants, for public pest control, on livestock, on home fruit, vegetable gardens or lawns, and for non-crop areas such as roads.

Keywords

Entomology

Disciplines

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EPA Announces Final Revisions to Worker Protection Standard Regulations ICM News

October 1, 2015

By Betsy Buffington and Kristine Schaefer, Pesticide Safety Education Program

On September 28, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the final revisions to the 1992 Agricultural Worker Protection Standard (WPS) regulation, which is designed to protect employees working on agricultural establishments from exposure to agricultural pesticides, both general and restricted use. The WPS must be followed when pesticide use is part of the production of agricultural plants on a farm, forest, nursery, or greenhouse. The WPS does not apply when pesticides are used on pastures, to control rodents, as bait in traps, on harvested plants, for public pest control, on livestock, on home fruit, vegetable gardens or lawns, and for non-crop areas such as roads.

Major changes to the regulation include:

- Requiring pesticide safety training at one-year intervals and expanding the existing pesticide safety training content.
- Eliminating the “grace period” that allowed workers to enter a treated area to perform WPS tasks before receiving full pesticide safety training.
- Mandatory recordkeeping: Records of application-specific pesticide information, as well as pesticide safety training, must be kept for two years.
- Minimum age requirement: Children under 18 are prohibited from handling pesticides.
- Expanded mandatory posting of no-entry signs for the most hazardous pesticides.
- No-entry application-exclusion zones up to 100 feet surrounding application equipment during pesticide application.
- Availability of pesticide application information and safety data sheets at central location or by request.
- Specific amounts of water to be used for routine washing, emergency eye flushing and other decontamination, including eye wash systems for handlers at pesticide mixing/loading sites.

The exemption for farm owners and their immediate family from certain WPS requirements on their own farms will continue, including the minimum age requirement. A table summarizing the key provisions in EPA’s current WPS regulation and the 2015 revisions is available at: <http://www2.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/worker-protection-standard-wps-comparison-chart>.

For more information on the WPS revisions, visit: <http://www2.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/revisions-worker-protection-standard>. The final rule will become effective 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register, <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Category: Pesticide Education

Crops:

Corn

Soybean

Forage

Cover Crop

Tags: regulations worker safety pesticide safety

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