Take Care When Washing Work Clothes Used Around Pesticides

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Abstract
Pesticide applicators and handlers need to wear, at a minimum, the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) specified on pesticide product labels. Most pesticide labels require a long-sleeved shirt and long pants. Proper laundering of work clothes that may be contaminated with pesticide residues is essential to reduce pesticide handlers’ short- and long-term exposure to pesticides and prevent the potential of residue cross-contamination onto other clothing.

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Pesticide applicators and handlers need to wear, at a minimum, the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) specified on pesticide product labels. Most pesticide labels require a long-sleeved shirt and long pants. Proper laundering of work clothes that may be contaminated with pesticide residues is essential to reduce pesticide handlers’ short- and long-term exposure to pesticides and prevent the potential of residue cross-contamination onto other clothing.

Many pesticide labels provide limited instructions for cleaning work clothes. In situations where no instructions are provided, the following are guidelines for caring for and laundering pesticide contaminated clothing. A downloadable publication, Laundering Pesticide-contaminated Work Clothes, provides additional, more detailed information.
WORK CLOTHES

Clothes used when working with or around pesticides

- Wash separately from all other laundry
- Wear gloves and long sleeves when washing pesticide-contaminated clothing
- Load only a few items at a time
- Use maximum amount of detergent recommended for machine
- Use highest water setting
- Use hot water
- Use pre-rinse/soak setting before starting wash cycle
- Use an aggressive wash cycle that lasts at least 20 minutes
- Use a high-speed spin
- Line dry or use dryer
- Run empty wash cycle with detergent and hot water before using washer for household laundry

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Category: Pesticide Education

Tags: PPE, work clothes, pesticide applicators, product labels, cleaning instructions
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