

# Pesticide Safety and Use

Pesticides are an important management tool in an integrated pest management program (IPM). Pesticides should be used in a manner that limits worker and domestic animal and wildlife exposure, runoff, drift, and the buildup of pesticide-resistant pathogens. Adequate training should be provided to all employees on how to use pesticides safely. For more pesticide safety information or a list of pesticide certification or recertification conferences for the state, go to: [LSU AgCenter Pesticide Safety Education Program \(www.lsuagcenter.com/pesticide\)](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/pesticide) or contact:

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## **Before applying a pesticide to a crop:**

- Confirm that the problem is due to a pathogen, insect or weed.
- Have the disease identified by an authority on plant pathogens and diseases.
- Select a pesticide that is recommended for the disease.
- Confirm that the pesticide is registered with the Environmental Protection Agency and labeled in Louisiana for the crop on which you intend to use it.
- Read the product label in its entirety. Pay particular attention to any application restrictions that may exist for the product.
- Check that your application equipment is functioning properly by testing it using only water. Make all repairs prior to using a pesticide.
- Make sure your application equipment is calibrated before applying a pesticide.
- Check that gloves and protective clothing fit properly and are clean and free of holes. Always have extra clean clothes available in case of an emergency.

## **Application of pesticides:**

- Always wear required protective clothing while spraying.
- Spray during weather conditions that mitigate pesticide drift.

## **Preparation, storage and disposal of pesticides:**

- Always wear protective clothing when handling pesticides.
- Mix pesticides in a well-ventilated area with access to clean water, soap and single use towels (decontamination supplies).
- Product labels and safety data sheets, as well as emergency contact information, should be available for quick reference.
- Only compatible pesticides should be tank-mixed. Read the label carefully to confirm pesticide compatibility. If you are not sure, a jar test is recommended.
- Do not mix or store pesticides near food or feed.
- Only mix the amount of pesticide required to treat the crop.
- Store pesticides in a locked room at the recommended temperature.
- For proper (and legal) disposal of unused pesticides, contact your local solid waste management authority, environmental agency or health department. To identify a local authority, go to: <http://www.epa.gov/wastes/wyl/stateprograms.htm> or call 1-800-CLEANUP. **Do not pour leftover pesticides down the sink, into the toilet or down a sewer or street drain!**

## **After applying a pesticide to a crop:**

- Promptly post signs indicating the crop has been treated with a pesticide if required by the pesticide label or the Worker Protection Standard requirements for agricultural use products.
- Clean and decontaminate equipment according to the product label.
- Document the day, time, crop and type and amount of pesticide applied. **Careful record keeping is extremely important.** A complete record-keeping manual can be found on the LSU AgCenter online store.

## **In case of an emergency:**

- In the case of direct human exposure that results in personal injury or ingestion of a pesticide, immediately dial 911 and/or contact your local physician. Be sure to have copies of the pesticide label and the safety data sheet for treating medical personnel.
- In the case of a pesticide spill, contact the Louisiana Department of Agriculture (LDAF) on the LDAF Emergency Hotline: 855-452-5323.

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The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Agricultural Worker Protection Standard (WPS) is aimed at reducing the risk of pesticide poisoning and injury among agricultural workers and pesticide handlers. Pesticide applicators must comply with this Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulation when using agricultural use pesticide products that reference the Worker Protection Standard, 40 CFR Part 170. In 2015, the EPA made major revisions to the Worker Protection Standard.

The LSU AgCenter has since worked to provide an updated WPS Train-the-Trainer program that is approved by the EPA. In Louisiana, those employers who wish to train their own workers and handlers (or other workers and handlers on nearby agricultural establishments) must be certified pesticide applicators and have been trained the new WPS Train-the-Trainer program provided through the LSU AgCenter. Note: all agricultural workers and handlers (who work with or around applied pesticides and who work for one of these four establishments: farm, forest, plant nursery or green house operation) must be trained on a yearly basis with approved training materials.

If a pesticide applicator who has had “WPS Trainer” status attended a WPS Train-the-Trainer program prior to November 2016, then he or she must attend an updated WPS Train-the-Trainer program. Once this training has been completed, the “WPS Trainer” category will be added to the back of their pesticide certification card. This WPS Trainer certification will be renewed when they attend their normal pesticide applicator recertification meeting on their three-year recertification cycle. Training dates and locations can be found at [www.lsuagcenter.com/pesticide](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/pesticide). (Select the WPS tab.)

If you would like to receive WPS Train-the-Trainer training so that you will be certified to administer WPS worker/handler training to workers who perform work around or with agricultural pesticide products, please email [LSUAGPSEP@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:LSUAGPSEP@agcenter.lsu.edu) and someone at the LSU AgCenter’s Pesticide Safety Education Program will assist you.

As part of the revised rule there are a few things that need to be pointed out:

- Workers and handlers must be trained every 12 months.
- WPS trainers must participate in the new EPA-approved Train-the-Trainer program (See information above).
- Workers and handlers must be trained by using EPA-approved training materials.
- The card system for records of training is no longer used. You must maintain the following worker/handler annual training information:
  - Trained worker’s printed name and signature.
  - Date of the training.
  - Information identifying which EPA-approved training materials were used.
  - The trainer’s name (and certification number) and qualification to train.
  - The worker or handler employer’s name.
- The LSU AgCenter has created a record keeping form that you are welcome to use. If you would like to download a training verification form for WPS, please do so by going to the LSU AgCenter’s PSEP website (within the WPS tab).
- Must retain records of training of workers and handlers for at least two years.
- Maintain the following information at a central location:
  - New safety poster <https://npsecstore.com/collections/posters>.
  - Application records.
  - Emergency medical contact information.
  - Safety Data Sheet (SDS/safety information).
- When using a pesticide that requires a respirator, employers must:
  - Have an employee medically evaluated by a physician or other licensed health care professional.
  - Have employee go through an annual fit test for each type of respirator required by the pesticide product label.
  - Have the employee participate in annual training on how to properly use the respirator(s).
  - Maintain records for two years of the completion of the above, respirator requirements.

The **How to Comply Manual** is a great reference guide and can be ordered at [www.npsecstore.com](http://www.npsecstore.com).

To get more information about the WPS revised rule you will need to refer to the final rule at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/agricultural-worker-protection-standard-wps>.

Where to get updated information:

- [www.lsuagcenter.com/pesticide](http://www.lsuagcenter.com/pesticide)
- <https://npsecstore.com/> (for the new poster and other important WPS materials)
- <https://pesticideresources.org/wps/training/index.html> (to get EPA approved worker/handler training materials)

This section was revised September 2022 by Bryan Gueltig.