

# The Worker Protection Standard: Notice About Applications<sup>1</sup>

Frederick M. Fishel<sup>2</sup>

*The Worker Protection Standard (WPS) is a Federal regulation designed to protect agricultural workers (people involved in the production of agricultural plants) and pesticide handlers (people mixing, loading, or applying pesticides or doing other tasks involving direct contact with pesticides). It has been in full implementation since 1995. A complete reference for the WPS is provided by: How to comply with the worker protection standard for agricultural pesticides: what employers need to know <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/epa-735-b-05-002.pdf>*

## Notifications on farms, forests, and nurseries

Under most circumstances, employers must make sure that workers are notified about areas where pesticide applications are taking place or where restricted-entry intervals are in effect. The restricted-entry interval refers to the length of time that workers are not allowed to enter the treated areas in most cases. With the majority of pesticide products, employers have a choice of warning workers orally **or** posting treated areas with signs. If labels don't specifically include language regarding posted signs warning workers, then an oral warning is all that is required. Some pesticide labels require you to notify workers both orally **and** with signs posted at entrances to the treated area. The warnings

are in effect for those workers who are or will be within ¼ mile of the treated area. Notification requirements will be in the "Directions for Use" section of the pesticide labeling under the heading "Agricultural Use Requirements" (Figure 1). If both types of notification are required, the following statement will be provided: "Notify workers of the application by warning them orally and by posting warning signs at entrances to treated areas." Products that require both oral and posted warnings are listed in Table 1.

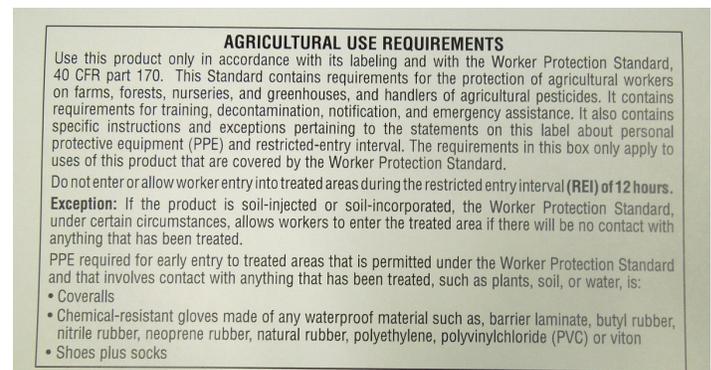


Figure 1. The "Agricultural Use Requirements" on the pesticide label states how to warn workers of pesticide applications.

1. This document is PI-107, one of a series of the Agronomy Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date March 2006. Revised February 2015. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Frederick M. Fishel, professor, Agronomy Department, and Director, Pesticide Information Office; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The use of trade names in this publication is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. UF/IFAS does not guarantee or warranty the products named, and references to them in this publication does not signify our approval to the exclusion of other products of suitable composition. Use pesticides safely. Read and follow directions on the manufacturer's label.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county's UF/IFAS Extension office. U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Nick T. Place, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.

## Notifications in Greenhouses

In greenhouses, you must post all treated areas, except those described below. If the labeling requires both types of notification, you must also notify workers orally.

## Exceptions to worker notification

Oral warnings need not be given to:

- Any worker on your farm, forest, or nursery who will not be in the treated area, or walk within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of a treated area, during the pesticide application or while the restricted-entry interval is in effect.
- Any worker who will not be in your greenhouse during a pesticide application or while a restricted-entry interval is in effect there.
- Any worker who applied (or supervised the application of) the pesticide and is aware of all of the information required to be given in the oral warning.

Treated area posting is not required if:

- No workers on your farm, forest, or nursery will be in the treated area, or walk within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of the treated area, during the pesticide application or while the restricted-entry interval is in effect.
- No workers will be in the greenhouse during the pesticide application or while the restricted-entry interval is in effect there.
- The only workers for whom you need to post applied (or supervised the application of) the pesticide and are aware of all of the information required to be given in the oral warning.

## Posted warning signs

Use WPS-design signs (Figure 2) when you post warnings at entrances to treated areas. If posting fumigant applications, use fumigant warning signs (Figure 3).

On farms, forests, and nurseries, post the signs so they can be seen from all points where workers usually enter the treated area, including at least:

- Each access road.
- Each border with any labor camp adjacent to the treated area.
- Each established walking route that enters the treated area.



Figure 2. WPS-designed sign for posting pesticide application warnings to workers.



Figure 3. WPS-designed sign for posting fumigant application warnings to workers.

When there are no usual points of worker entry, post the signs in the corners of the treated area or in places where they will be most easily seen. In greenhouses, post the signs so they can be seen from all points where workers usually enter the treated area, including doorways, aisles, and other walking routes. When there are no usual points of worker

entry to the treated area, post the signs in the corners of the treated area or in places where they will be easily seen.



Figure 4. Posting the entrance to a greenhouse.  
Credits: UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office

Timing and visibility of warning signs:

- Post signs 24 hours or less before the scheduled application of the pesticide.
- Keep signs posted during application and throughout the restricted-entry interval (if any).
- Remove the signs within 3 days after the end of the restricted-entry interval. If there is no restricted-entry interval for that application, remove the signs within 3 days after the end of the application.
- Keep workers out during the entire time the signs are posted (except for trained and equipped early-entry workers entering as permitted under WPS).
- Keep signs visible and legible while they are posted.

When several adjoining areas are to be treated with pesticides on a rotating or sequential basis, you may post the entire area at the same time. Worker entry, except for early entry permitted by the WPS, is prohibited for the entire area while the signs are posted.

## Oral warnings to workers

Oral warnings (Figure 5) must include:

- The location and description of the treated area,
- The time during which entry is restricted, and
- Instructions not to enter the treated area until the restricted-entry interval has expired.



Figure 5. The majority of pesticides regulated under the WPS require an oral warning to workers.

Oral warnings must be communicated to workers in a manner they can understand. The timing of oral warnings should be such that:

- Workers who are on your establishment at the start of an application must be orally warned before the application takes place;
- Workers who are not on your establishment at the start of an application must be orally warned at the beginning of their first work period if (1) the application is still taking place or (2) the restricted-entry interval for the pesticide is in effect.

## Additional information

How to comply with the worker protection standard for agricultural pesticides: what employers need to know. United States Environmental Protection Agency. Revised 2005: <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/epa-735-b-05-002.pdf>