



## FARM WORKERS: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS REGARDING PESTICIDES

*Farm workers have the right to a safe workplace.  
Farm workers also have the right to be free from retaliation for asking for a safe workplace.*

*If you are a field worker in Washington State, you have the following rights:*

- to **receive training** about the hazards of working in the presence of dangerous pesticides,
  - at the time of your job assignment **AND**
  - whenever a new health hazard related to a chemical exposure is introduced **AND**
  - at least every five years.
- to **have a poster displayed** at a central location with, the names of the pesticides used in the last 30 days, and when they were applied, **ALONG WITH**
  - a poster with general pesticide safety information and the name and address of the nearest emergency medical facility **AND**
  - information about the **most toxic pesticides** must also be **provided verbally**.
- to **stay out of** a pesticide **treated area** until the **restricted entry interval has expired** (the “REI” is the period of time to stay out of a treated area).
  - The period to stay out (REI) is **usually between 4 to 72 hours** depending on the pesticide used. (but can be **much longer, such as 2 weeks** for Guthion).
  - If you are told to **go into the treated area** before the REI has passed, you have the right to use the proper protective equipment required by the pesticide label and **follow other label restrictions** for entering the treated area. If you **do not receive these additional protections**, you **do not have to enter** fields covered by an REI.
- to have **access to decontamination** areas that are supplied with water, soap and towels to wash in case of an accidental exposure to pesticides.
- to **be protected from pesticide drift** from your workplace or from a neighboring workplace.
- to **seek medical attention** if you believe that you have become ill due to pesticide exposure.
  - Your employer must provide you with **free transportation** to a medical facility from the field or labor camp.

- You have the **right to file a claim for Industrial Insurance** and have at least the first doctor visit paid. If your claim is approved it could cover the costs of medical treatment and time missed from work due to illness if it is more than 3 days. ***It is against the law to retaliate or discriminate against a worker for filing an Industrial Insurance claim.***
- Your employer, if asked, must tell you or your representative the name of the pesticide(s) used.

*If you are a pesticide handler (who sprays, mixes or loads pesticides), you have the following rights:*

- to **receive personal protective equipment (PPE)** such as gloves, protective clothing or a respirator, that is **required by the pesticide label**.
  - You have the right to be instructed on proper use.
  - You have the right to use personal protective equipment (PPE) that is in good condition and kept clean by the employer. Equipment must be inspected every day of use for problems and repairs.
- to **receive a copy of the product label** for the pesticide that is being sprayed. If you cannot read the label, you have the right to have it explained to you.
- to **not** spray if pesticides are coming in contact with other people or if the weather could cause drift that could damage or injure nearby people, land, desirable plants, or animals.
- to have **access to decontamination** areas that are supplied with clean water, eye flush dispensers, disposable towels, and clean clothing, such as coveralls.
- to **emergency medical assistance**. Your employer must provide you with **free transportation to a health care facility** if you believe that you have become ill due to exposure to pesticides.

**Note:** *workers who regularly handle certain pesticides that can poison the nervous system can have the right to receive blood tests to see if they have had too much exposure (Cholinesterase). Contact Legal Services for more information.*

**To report a violation** of any rights regarding pesticide violations in employment contact the **Department of Labor and Industries** at **1-800-354-5423** or the **Washington Department of Health** at **1-888-586-9427** or the **Legal Services** offices listed below.

Any worker who attempts to comply with pesticide rules or complains about pesticide exposure or other practices has the right to **NOT SUFFER RETALIATION** or **DISCRIMINATION** for exercising his or her rights.

If you have a problem with pesticides or you have suffered retaliation or discrimination for exercising any rights regarding pesticides, you can contact any of the offices below for help:

**NORTHWEST JUSTICE PROJECT**

510 Larson Building  
6 South Second Street  
Yakima, WA 98901  
Tel: 1-888-201-1018 or (509) 574-4234

**COLUMBIA LEGAL SERVICES**

600 Larson Building  
6 South Second Street  
Yakima, WA 98901  
Tel: 1-800-631-1323 or (509) 575-5593