

# National Nursery Issues

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## Worker Protection Standard Update

As reported in the January, 1993 issue of FNN, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revised the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) for Agricultural Pesticides. The WPS governs pesticides used in the production of agricultural plants which includes forest and conservation seedlings. Most WPS provisions were due to take effect on April 15, 1994. However, before that date, legislation was enacted which delays implementation of some, but not all, of the new WPS standards until January 1, 1995. The new law was enacted to allow more time for the agricultural community to learn about the WPS and to properly prepare for implementation.

Specifics of the new revisions depend on how the WPS requirements appear on the pesticide label. Some requirements are fully spelled out on the label whereas others are referred to, but not thoroughly described. During 1994, you must comply with the WPS provisions that are spelled out, which include the requirements for personal protection equipment (PPE), the restricted entry interval (REI), and the requirement for "double notification" - if this requirement is on the label.

You do not need to comply with the "referenced" requirements until January 1, 1995. These requirements include pesticide safety training for agricultural workers and handlers, decontamination sites, notification of workers about pesticide applications, display of information about pesticide applications, emergency assistance, and display of safety posters. The new legislation also provides optional PPE requirements for some irrigation work and excludes crop advisors from WPS coverage for the remainder of this year.

Well, are you sufficiently confused? Maybe, **Table 1** on the following page will help. As you will see, the new WPS requirements are detailed and demanding, so check the WPS Handbook for the specifics. See the January, 1994 FNN for information on ordering the WPS Compliance Manual, Posters, and Worker Training Booklets. If you don't have a copy, let me know and I'll send you one.

### Source:

Cress, D. Kansas Pesticide Newsletter 17(4); April 19, 1994

**Table 1. Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides**

WPS Requirement	When Does It Apply?		Specific Details
	1994	After 1/1/95	
Restricted Entry Interval	Yes	Yes	Already specified on the label.
Early Entry Activities involving contact with treated surfaces	Yes - no time limits	Yes - time limits	In 1994, no limit on worker time in treated area. After 1/1/95, usually only 1 hr/day.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Handlers	Yes	Yes	Already specified on the label.
PPE for Early Entry Workers contacting treated surfaces	Yes	Yes	Clean and fully-operational PPE must be provided by employer.
Choice of PPE for Early Entry Irrigation Workers	Yes	No	Until 1/1/95, choice of PPE or coveralls plus chemical-resistant gloves and footwear if there is pesticide contact only to lower body. After 1/1/95, must use PPE on label.
Notification of Workers about Applications	No	Yes	Required after 1/1/95. In most cases, employer can choose oral notification or posting, unless both are required by the label. Greenhouse uses require posting.
Double Notification - Oral and Posted Warnings	Yes	Yes	In 1994, employer must post and warn. After 1/1/95, must use the WPS field warning sign and follow new posting and notification requirements.
Protection for Crop Advisors	No	Yes	Applies after 1/1/95
Pesticide Safety Training	No	Yes	WPS requires basic safety training for workers and more detailed training for handlers.
Additional Requirements: - Poster Displays - Decontamination Sites - Emergency Assistance - Monitoring Handlers	No	Yes	This delay gives employers time to learn and implement these new WPS requirements.