



COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

WPS Pesticide Fact Sheet #421
CEPEP 06/03
Updated 6/06

FEDERAL WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD

S.K. McDonald
L.M. Hofsteen

This fact sheet defines the decontamination sites required by the Worker Protection Standard (WPS).

This fact sheet was revised as part of the Comprehensive Worker Protection Standard Awareness Project for Colorado.

<http://www.cepep.colostate.edu>

Federal Worker Protection Standard Decontamination Sites

The [Worker Protection Standard](#) (WPS) was revised and expanded in 1992 by the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA). This regulation applies where pesticides are used in production of agricultural plants for commercial or research purposes on farms, forests, nurseries, greenhouses, and related structures. It covers pesticide applicators, mixer/loaders, disposers of pesticide containers, and those who may be exposed to a pesticide residue on the job. Both general-use and restricted-use pesticides are covered by WPS.

The regulations have exposure reduction measures that will reduce the risk of pesticide poisonings and injuries among agricultural workers and pesticide handlers.



Employers must establish a decontamination site for all workers and handlers for washing off pesticides and pesticide residues. A decontamination site must be within a quarter (1/4) mile of the employees' work site.

Employers must provide a site where workers and handlers can wash pesticide residue from their hands and body. A decontamination site should supply:

- Enough water for routine and emergency whole-body washing and for eye flushing
- Plenty of soap and single-use towels
- Employers also must provide water that is safe and cool enough for washing, eye flushing, and drinking
- Employers may not use tank-stored water that also is used for mixing or diluting pesticides

Specific requirements differ depending whether employees are doing worker or handler tasks.

Worker decontamination site requirements:

- Decontamination sites must be provided for workers from application to 30 days after expiration of the REI
- Worker decontamination sites may not be in areas being treated or under an REI

Handler decontamination site requirements:

- Decontamination sites must be provided for handlers during the handling task
- Soap, clean towels and water must be provided when handlers remove their PPE and must have enough water for entire-body

washing and a clean change of clothes

- The site for handlers must be where they are mixing and loading
- Handler decontamination sites may be in the treated area in which the handler is working, as long as the materials are stored in enclosed containers
- When the label requires protective eyewear, handlers must be provided one pint of emergency eye-flush water
- Employers must provide handlers with the previously mentioned supplies at each mixing site and at the place where protective equipment is removed at the end of a task

If the work site is more than a quarter (1/4) mile from the nearest point of vehicular access, the decontamination site may be located at the nearest access point. Clean water from springs, streams, lakes, or other sources may be used for decontamination if such water is more readily available than the water at the decontamination site.

Disclaimer: The Worker Protection Standard is a very complex regulation that will require considerable study. This fact sheet is just an introduction and should not be used as a final interpretation. Refer to the complete WPS regulations in the [Code of Federal Register 40 Part 170](#).

References and Resources

EPA's Agriculture Compliance Center. June 2005. www.epa.gov/agriculture

The Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides - How to Comply, What Employers Need to Know. July 1993. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA 735-B-93-001, Washington, D.C.

[CEPEP Home Page](#)