

Working Safely with Pesticides

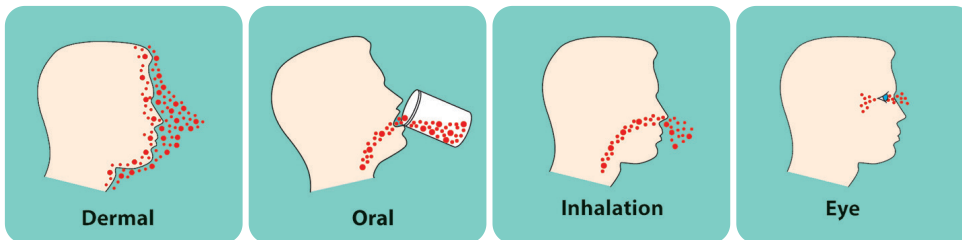
Protect Yourself, Your Coworkers, and the Farm



Every pesticide is hazardous. Safe use is essential every time a pesticide is handled. Agricultural workers experience higher risk of pesticide illness compared to other occupations.

How Exposure Happens

Pesticides can enter your body through four routes of contact:



Did you know?

The EPA estimates that among two million agricultural workers in the United States, physicians diagnose 10,000-20,000 pesticide poisonings each year (NIOSH 2012).

When Handling Pesticides...

✓ Do:

- Read and follow the pesticide label every time.
- Wear required personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Know first aid and emergency procedures.
- Store pesticides in a locked, secure area.
- Check weather conditions (wind, heat, temperature inversion) before applying.
- Follow restricted entry intervals (REIs).
- Mix and apply pesticides carefully to avoid spills.

✗ Don't:

- Handle or apply pesticides without proper training or certification.
- Skip or substitute required PPE.
- Eat, drink, or smoke while handling pesticides.
- Ignore label instructions or warning signals.
- Store pesticides in unlabeled or food containers.
- Work in unsafe conditions (high wind, enclosed spaces without ventilation).
- Assume pesticides are "safe" based on low toxicity labeling.

Learn More

- Review the full Pesticide Handling module in the [Forward Farm Safety Toolbox](#).
- Watch training videos on the [Worker Protection Standard](#) created by the Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative.