



Handling and Laundering Pesticide-Soiled Clothing Quiz¹

Judy Mock and Harriet T. Jennings²

America's abundant food supply is dependent upon the use of pesticides in crop and livestock management. Some of these chemicals can harm humans, so proper laundering of pesticidesoiled clothing is important. Sound laundry procedures protect the pesticide applicator, the person doing the laundry and the entire family from pesticide residues.

Read and answer the following true and false questions. Write your answers on a piece of paper and then check them against the answers. Were you using safe handling and laundering procedures prior to the quiz? If not, what changes can you make now?

QUIZ YOURSELF

(True or False)

- To determine the toxicity of the pesticide, it is important to read the pesticide label.
- Pesticide-soiled clothing should be removed outdoors.
- Unlined rubber gloves should always be worn when handling and laundering pesticide-soiled clothing.
- All pesticide-soiled clothing can be safely laundered.
- Never prerinse pesticide-soiled clothing.
- Before laundering, store pesticide-soiled garments with the rest of the family's dirty clothes.
- Wash pesticide-soiled garments separately from family laundry.
- Wash only a few pesticide-soiled garments at one time.
- Cold water wash temperature is the most effective when laundering pesticidesoiled garments.
- Always use granular-type detergents.
- Never mix ammonia and chlorine bleach.
- After laundering pesticide-soiled clothing, always clean the washer by running it through a complete cycle with hot or warm water and detergent.
- After laundering pesticide-soiled clothing, dry the garments in the clothes dryer.
- Clean all other clothing items, such as washable caps, waterproof gloves and goggles.

1. This document is from a series of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina. Publication date: January 1992.

2. Specialist-in-charge (human environment), Extension Clothing Specialist; North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service

ANSWERS FOR TRUE-FALSE STATEMENTS

1. **True** - ALWAYS be aware of the pesticide that was used and ALWAYS read the label.
2. **True** - To PREVENT contaminating items in the home, it's safest to remove garments outdoors (away from traffic paths) and to shake any pesticide from the garments. If a granular pesticide was used, all pockets and cuffs should be emptied. Remove as much of the pesticide as possible from the garments at this time to lessen the chance of contaminating the washing machine.
3. **True** - Wear unlined rubber gloves (the lining in gloves can become contaminated) to handle pesticide-soiled clothing. Carefully wash the gloves in hot water after each use and store and use them ONLY for this purpose.
4. **False** - Remove clothes immediately if they become saturated with highly toxic pesticides and discard them in an appropriate manner so that others won't be contaminated. Do not try to launder them.
5. **False** - Prerinsing is a very important step as it helps to remove pesticide residue. Prerinsing can be done by:
 - presoaking in a suitable container before washing;
 - prerinsing with agitation in an automatic washing machine;
 - spraying or hosing garment(s) outdoors.
6. **False** - NEVER store contaminated clothing with family laundry.
7. **True** - To PREVENT contaminating family laundry always wash contaminated garments separately.
8. **True** - The more water used the better. Large amounts of water aid in thoroughly flushing pesticides from fabrics. Using a full washer level also decreases the possibility that a pesticide would be redeposited back on the fabric.
9. **False** - In general, washing in hot water removes more pesticide from the clothing. Avoid cold-water washing! Although cold-water washing might save energy, research has shown that cold water is relatively ineffective in removing pesticides from clothing.
10. **False** - Most laundry detergents are similarly effective in removing pesticides from fabric if the pesticide isn't oil-based. Research has shown that heavy-duty liquid detergents are more effective than other detergents in removing oil-based (emulsifiable concentrate) pesticides. Heavy-duty liquid detergents are known for their oil-removing ability.
11. **True** - Bleach and ammonia don't remove pesticides from clothing. NEVER mix these two products because they react together to form poisonous chlorine gas.
12. **True** - Small amounts of pesticides remain in the washing machine after the wash cycle is over, so it's important to rinse the washing machine with an empty load. Use hot water, the same detergent, and the same machine setting and cycle used for laundering the soiled clothing and run the machine through an extra cycle.
13. **False** - Line dry the clothes to keep from contaminating the dryer. Sunlight and air movement will aid in decomposing or breaking down any pesticide residue not removed during laundering.
14. **True** - Wash hard hat, goggles, respirator, gloves and neoprene boots in hot, soapy water after each use. If possible, remove the charcoal filter to avoid getting it wet. Store the clean articles away from where pesticides are stored.