

Training Module: Pesticide-Contaminated Clothing Laundering

Objective: To be able to launder pesticide-contaminated clothing according to safety guidelines.

Trainer's Note: Although personal protective equipment (PPE) should be worn when working with pesticides, if clothing does become contaminated with pesticides it must be laundered separately and properly. This also applies to reusable PPE.

Background

Traditional types of work clothing absorb pesticides and hold them close to the skin. The chance of the pesticide being absorbed by the skin is increased. Clothing can be decontaminated, but it is recommended to wear personal protective clothing to keep the pesticides away from the skin. Personal protective clothing must also be decontaminated.

When laundering reusable protective clothing:

Always read the pesticide label before doing anything else. The label may give recommendations for the laundering process. All clothing worn while working with pesticides should be considered contaminated, and be separated from the rest of the clothing. When working with possible pesticide contaminated clothing, **rubber gloves should be worn**. Clothing should be laundered after each use. It is easier to remove pesticides daily than to remove accumulated contamination. Contaminated clothing should not be dry cleaned or washed in a public laundry facility.

****Before laundering contaminated clothing, check with local or state agencies for proper disposal of contaminated rinse water.**

After taking off clothing, use detergent and water to thoroughly wash your hands, face, neck and forearms. Then take a shower.

Steps in laundering reusable protective clothing:

- Pre-rinse or presoak clothing. Presoak clothing contaminated with similar pesticides together.
- Pesticide-contaminated clothing should be laundered separately from household laundry.
- The machine should not be overloaded, so only wash a few contaminated items at a time.
- Use only hot water (140 degrees to 160 degrees).
- The water level should be on the highest setting, washing for the full cycle (12 minutes) using a double rinse.
- Dry detergent should be used to clean dry formulations of pesticides, and a liquid detergent to clean liquid formulations of pesticides.
- Use 25 percent more detergent when clothing items have been treated with a soil/water repellent finish (i.e. Scotchguard™ or Zepel™).
- **Bleach should not be used.** It does not help to remove pesticide residue, and can react with ammonia fertilizer forming chlorine gas, which can be **fatal**.
- All laundered clothing should be line dried. Sunlight will help to breakdown any pesticide residue left in the clothing, and keep the dryer from becoming contaminated.

- Store pesticide handler clothing in a clean, dry place **separate from other clothing**, and away from pesticides and pesticide containers.
- **Clean the washing machine** by running the empty washer through a full wash cycle with hot water and detergent. This is an important step in the laundering of pesticide contaminated clothing. If the machine is not decontaminated, then other clothing will become contaminated.

Pesticides cannot be removed from:

- leather boots
- leather watchbands
- inner bands on caps and some decorative items
- severely contaminated clothing

Warning:

1. Do not wash limited use coveralls if they have been contaminated with pesticides.
2. Treat contaminated coveralls the same way you would treat the pesticide. Wear gloves and other PPE to protect yourself from pesticide residues within the clothing.

Reusable coated/laminated suits:

Suits made from materials such as PVC or nitrile should not be decontaminated in a washing machine. Instead, hose them off and wash them in a tub of hot soapy water. Protective clothing made of nitrile, PVC or other rubberlike compounds should be line dried in the shade to keep harmful sunlight from damaging the materials. Suits made from plastic laminates, nitrile or latex may melt if placed in a dryer.

Review the Following Points:

- Pesticide-contaminated clothing should be washed separately from other clothing.
- When washing, use the maximum water level and the hottest water, and then line dry clothing.
- Clean the machine with a full wash cycle using hot water.
- Contaminated coveralls should be treated the same way you would treat the pesticide.

True and False Answer Key

1. F, 2. T, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T

Pesticide-Contaminated Clothing Laundering Quiz

True or False

Name _____

1. Pesticide residue can easily be removed from leather. T F
2. Contaminated clothing should be laundered after each use. T F
3. Rubber gloves should always be worn when laundering pesticide contaminated clothing. T F
4. Pesticide-contaminated clothing does not have to be kept separate from other laundry. T F
5. Bleach should not be used in the laundering process. T F