



Protective Clothing for Pesticide Application¹

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WHY WORRY ABOUT PROTECTIVE CLOTHING?

Pesticides enter the body most frequently through the skin. Other ways are through the eyes, nose or mouth. Wear protective clothing when applying pesticides to reduce your risk of pesticide poisoning.

RISKS INVOLVED IN HANDLING PESTICIDES

Your risk depends on two factors: exposure to pesticides and the toxicity of the pesticides. Toxicity information is given on the pesticide label. Pesticide labels list the active ingredient and concentration. Three label signal words that are used to indicate relative toxicity are:

DANGER/POISON - highly hazardous

WARNING - moderately hazardous

CAUTION - slightly hazardous

Exposure is related to how the pesticide contacts the body: through the skin, eyes, nose or mouth. Protective clothing and equipment minimize exposure and the risks involved in handling pesticides.

INSTRUCTIONS ON PESTICIDE LABELS

The signal words on the label can help you to determine the type of clothing to wear. Many pesticide labels give additional useful information. For example, dusts, wettable powders and broken particles from granules are inhaled easily. Labels for many of these

products carry statements like "harmful if inhaled" or "fatal if inhaled." When applying such products, wear a respirator.

Labels also describe the formulation - the active ingredient(s), the concentration, base liquids or carriers - and other information. It is important to read and understand this information. For example, oil-based liquids (emulsifiable concentrates) absorb easily through skin, so you need to protect your skin from exposure to these types of materials.

PESTICIDE-PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Regular work clothing made of heavy weight, tightly woven fabrics gives you some protection. Specialized liquid-proof, chemical-resistant clothing gives you much more, but you may not be as comfortable. In North Carolina's climate, it is difficult to be comfortable when you need protection the most - during the hot, humid growing season. To minimize exposure to pesticides, you should always:

- Wear work clothing with long pants and sleeves. (Clothing with a soil-repellent finish can increase your protection).
- Wear unlined, liquid-proof, chemical-resistant gloves; unlined neoprene or rubber boots; and a wide-brimmed hat.

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- Wear a chemical-resistant apron over cloth coveralls when mixing, loading or handling undiluted pesticides.
- Wear a liquid-proof, chemical-resistant coverall or suit with a hood or a waterproof, widebrimmed hat if there is any chance of becoming wet with spray.
- Wear a respirator whenever there is a risk of inhaling pesticide vapors, fumes or dust.
- Wear an eye or face shield if the pesticide may splash

Wearing protective clothing helps to reduce your risk of exposure to pesticides. The types of clothing and how the clothing is worn influence how well you are protected.

In all cases, read the pesticide label completely, and follow the instructions given.

Ultimately, you are responsible for the safe handling and use of pesticides.