

# PESTICIDE SAFETY



Information

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

N No. 7

## Washing Pesticide Work Clothing

**If you work with pesticides, your work clothes can have pesticides on them.** This can happen even if you wear coveralls or other personal protective equipment (PPE) over your own clothes.

This leaflet tells you how to clean your own work clothes. It is your employer's job to clean your PPE. If you don't wash your clothes, the pesticides on them can make you, and even your family sick. Following these directions will help protect you and your family from pesticides.

### Wear clean work clothes every day

Wash clothes that have pesticides on them as soon as you can. The longer you wait, the harder it is to wash the pesticide off. If you keep wearing the clothes, you can get more pesticides on them. Pesticides on your clothes can get onto your skin and into your body making you sick.

#### Before you wash your clothes:

- If you have pesticide powder, granules, or loose dirt on your clothes, shake them off before you leave work. Pay special attention to your cuffs and pockets.
- Keep clothes with pesticides on them (including underwear) in closed plastic bags until you are ready to wash the clothes. Keep the bags outside your home. Make sure children and pets cannot get to the bags.
- Tell the person who does the laundry at home that your clothes have pesticides on them. Explain how to wash them.

You cannot get all the pesticides off of leather items such as watch bands, belts, and boots. You must throw these items away if they have pesticides on them. If you wear them again, the pesticide can get in your body through your skin.

### Washing Pesticide Work Clothing



- ▶ **Wear rubber gloves**
- ▶ **Keep separate from other clothes**
- ▶ **Use a pre-soak cycle or run through the wash cycle twice**
- ▶ **Use the highest water level**
- ▶ **Wash a full cycle, in very HOT water**
- ▶ **Use a strong detergent**
- ▶ **If possible, dry clothes outside on a line**
- ▶ **Clean the washing machine by running a cycle with no clothes**

When you come home from work, do not hug or touch your family until you have changed out of your work clothes. Shower and wash your hair. This is to protect your family from pesticides.

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### When you wash your clothes:

- Do not mix clothes with pesticides on them with other laundry. They must be washed alone, or pesticide can get onto your family's laundry and make them sick.
  - Try to dump the clothes straight from the plastic bag into the washer, without touching them. If you have to touch the clothes, wear rubber gloves, wash the gloves, take them off, and throw them away. Then wash your hands and arms.
  - Only put a few things in the washer at one time, use the longest cycle with **LOTS** of **HOT** water and a strong detergent. Cold water will not do a good job taking out pesticides. You can use bleach if you want, but it does not help take out pesticides.
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### Washing pesticide work clothing:

1. Wear rubber gloves.
  2. Keep clothes separate from other laundry.
  3. Use a pre-soak cycle or run through the wash cycle twice.
  4. Use the highest water level.
  5. Wash a full cycle, in very hot water.
  6. Use strong detergent.
  7. If possible, dry the clothes outside on a line
  8. Clean the washing machine afterward by running a cycle with no clothes.
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### After you wash your clothes:

- Before you use the washing machine again, clean it by running it with no clothes—only hot water and detergent.
  - Dry your clothes on a line outside if you can. The sun will help get rid of any pesticides that are left.
  - If you dry the clothes in a dryer, run it until the clothes are completely dry. Then run the dryer empty for 10 minutes.
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## What if I spill pesticide on my clothes?

If you spill pesticides on your clothes, take them off **RIGHT AWAY**. If you spill a pesticide that is full strength (not mixed with water) **DO NOT** try to clean the clothes, you must **THROW THEM AWAY**. Follow the state and local rules for doing this (ask your employer how to do this).

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## What about cleaning Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

It is your employer's job to clean coveralls and other PPE, or they may train you how to clean your PPE at work. **NEVER** take PPE home to clean it.

Your supervisor must make sure that you change out of your coveralls and wash at the end of the workday. You should not take the coveralls home.

**If you do not go to your employer's headquarters at the end of your workday**, you must take off your coveralls and put them in a container (a plastic bag is good) outside of your home. Return them to your employer for washing.



*If you don't get all the information you need in your training, you should call your County Agricultural Commissioner, or the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) for more information. You can find the Commissioner's number in your local white pages phone directory, by calling 1-87PestLine, or at:*

<http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/exec/county/countymap/>

DPR's Regional Offices are:

- Northern (West Sacramento) 916/376-8960
- Central (Clovis) 559/297-3511
- Southern (Anaheim) 714/279-7690

**Pesticide Complaint?**

**1-87PestLine**  
INFORMATION LINE



**1-877-378-5463**