

## NEWS COLUMN

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### **Protective Clothing a Must around Pesticides**

With spring field work underway, the use of herbicides and insecticides will be part of the seasonal agenda.

Using proper protective clothing is not only a good idea; it is also a label requirement. It is very important to always take a few minutes to read over all labels and find out what protective clothing is required. The clothing needed will be listed there. If the label calls for a respirator or goggles-wear them. What the label calls for as far as protective clothing is for best preserving a persons health and safety.

Remember mixing and loading usually require the most protective gear, since the product is most concentrated at that point in the process.

Gloves are probably the most important and widely needed article of protective clothing because everything we do involves the use of our hands. Make sure gloves are of chemically resistant rubber, neoprene, etc., and that they fit well. If they don't fit they will not get used. Make sure to check gloves for cracks and pinholes and replace as soon as they start to show signs of wear. Carry an extra pair or two at all times.

The following are some more important things to keep in mind about protective clothing when working with pesticides.

- Wear unlined rubber boots when mixing and spraying. Leather boots or shoes can never be decontaminated and will therefore always carry a residue. This is why leather gloves are a big mistake around any chemical substance.
- Cloth caps, baseball, seedcorn, company caps, etc. are not recommended to be worn when mixing and applying pesticides. Hard hats are easily washed and cleaned and are the only type of headgear advisable.
- The use of disposable tyvek coveralls are recommended. They can be purchased reasonably in volume and can be worn 2-4 times before being disposed of. Tyvek come in different colors and kinds. They are very effective in reducing exposure.
- At a minimum consider protective gloves and a long-sleeved shirt, since hands and arms generally receive the most exposure.
- Besides protective clothing, applicators need access to clean water, soap, eye wash, disposable towels and a clean change of clothing. Commercial eye washes are good, however saline solutions used for contact lenses may be used and are less expensive.
- In the event of a spill on the skin, remove the contaminated clothing immediately and flush the area with water. Consult the treatment or first aid section of the label for specific directions. It is important therefore that you have the water and label close at hand while spraying in the field.
- Do not think twice about consulting with a doctor or poison control center if you if you do not feel well. Overexposure to pesticides is often mistaken with those symptoms associated with the flu (headache, high temperature, nausea, sweating, body aches, tightness of the chest, etc.). **National Poison Control Center #1-800-222-1222.**
- Clothing can also become contaminated by just vapors or droplets in the air. Make sure to shower and change clothing as soon as time permits after spraying is completed.
- Store and launder all contaminated clothing separately from the family's clothing and make certain the person doing the laundry knows the clothing was worn during spraying. This is so that the clothing can be washed separately in hot water with an empty cycle between it and other loads of wash. Always line dry clothing worn for pesticides application purposes.
- Remember liquids are not the only types of pesticides that can be harmful. Dusts and powders need to be highly respected and masks and respirators should be highly considered when working around them. A contaminate breathed into the lungs is 10 times more toxic than a substance spilled on the skin.
- Smoking or eating without first thoroughly washing hands and face is not highly recommended when working around pesticides. It is very important in order to alleviate all sources of contamination.