



High risk safety factors on farms

OSHA

The following factors may increase risk of injury or illness for farm workers:

- Age: Injury rates are highest among children age 15 and under and adults over 65.
- Equipment and machinery: Most farm accidents and fatalities involve machinery. Proper machine guarding and doing equipment maintenance according to manufacturers' recommendations can help prevent accidents.
- Protective equipment: Using protective equipment, such as seat belts on tractors, and personal protective equipment (such as safety gloves, coveralls, boots, hats, aprons, goggles, face shields) could significantly reduce farming injuries.
- Medical care: Hospitals and emergency medical care are typically not readily accessible in rural areas near farms.

New pesticide application rules exceed EPA requirements

Oregon OSHA

SALEM, Ore. — Oregon OSHA has adopted rules that increase protections against the risk of pesticides drifting off their mark when spraying occurs outdoors. The rules, which exceed federal requirements, will take effect Jan. 1, 2019.

The rules expand a protective zone; extend the evacuation period; require doors, windows, and air intakes to be closed during pesticide applications; and require storage for shoes and boots to prevent tracking of pesticides into worker housing.

Pesticide drift outside a treated area is already illegal. However, Oregon OSHA's rules further address the risk by adding safeguards for workers and their families who rely on farm housing. The rules are part of a broader and ongoing effort to reduce incidents of unsafe pesticide exposure among agricultural workers and pesticide handlers.

"Putting these rules into action means workers and their families are better protected in Oregon than they are in the vast majority of



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the country," said Michael Wood, administrator for Oregon OSHA. "These rules are the result of a lot of hard work by stakeholders and plenty of thoughtful public comments about the right approach to a challenging issue."

At issue is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Application Exclusion Zone (AEZ). The zone is adjacent to — but outside of — the pesticide-treated area. It provides an added level of protection beyond the safeguards enforced with respect to the treated area itself. The AEZ surrounds and moves

with spray equipment and must be free of all people other than appropriately trained and equipped pesticide handlers.

The EPA's rule requires people to move 100 feet away from an area being treated with pesticides. However, it was designed for workers in the field. It did not account for the interaction of the AEZ with worker housing and other agricultural structures. The EPA rule also allows people to return to the zone immediately after the spray equipment has passed by.

By contrast, Oregon

OSHA's rules require a 100-foot AEZ when the pesticide applicator is not required to use a respirator. Moreover, people must stay out of the zone for an additional 15 minutes, either by staying indoors or remaining evacuated. This recognizes that illegal drift may occur and allows any drift to settle.

Oregon OSHA's rules exceed those of the EPA in other ways, including:

- For pesticides that require applicators to use respirators, the AEZ expands to 150 feet — 50 feet more than the EPA rule. People must stay out of the zone for an additional 15 minutes. There is no option to stay indoors.
- For all pesticide applications, doors and windows must be shut, and air intakes must be turned off before people evacuate or remain inside an enclosed agricultural structure. During evacuation, the EPA rule does not include such requirements.
- Closeable storage areas for shoes or boots must be provided to prevent tracking of pesticides into worker housing. The EPA rule includes no such requirements.

Employers must adhere to notification and instruction requirements, including informing people of the start and stop times of pesticide spray, and providing them with instructions to close windows, doors, and air intakes. The EPA rule includes no such provisions.

Oregon OSHA's newly adopted rules complement — and complete — revisions the agency made last year to the EPA Worker Protection Standard. Last year's changes affected areas such as worker notifications, frequency of training, and trainer qualifications. Changes made by the EPA that were already in effect in Oregon include respiratory protection, hazard communication, and emergency eye-washing requirements.

Oregon OSHA's updates to the Worker Protection Standard grew out of a transparent decision-making process. That process included public hearings, an examination of all written and verbal comments, an advisory committee, and a financial impact analysis conducted by a committee of both grower and worker representatives.

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