

Train the Trainer: A new WSDA safety program

The WSDA's Pesticide Management Division has introduced a new and innovative pesticide safety training program called *Train the Trainer*. The program is specifically designed to help agricultural employers, managers and supervisors overcome difficulties meeting WPS compliance standards, and simultaneously bring efficient pesticide safety training to field workers and pesticide handlers as mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

In the past six months, WSDA conducted five Train the Trainer events in Skagit, Yakima and Grant counties. At last count, WSDA had successfully trained nearly 130 agricultural managers, supervisors and foremen.

TRAINING MAKES SENSE

After conducting several WPS inspections last year for the tree fruit industry in four Central Washington counties, the department found that field workers rarely receive pesticide safety training. What is more, the training offered to handlers often fails to meet the WPS training criteria. Growers expressed their concerns to WSDA having recognized the need for regular training sessions. Pesticide Management staff agreed with growers, and acted swiftly by developing the *Train the Trainer Program*.

BREAKING DOWN THE WORKSHOP

The workshop is an intensive and interactive course available to 30 participants at one time. The one-and-a-half day training offers a strong hands-on component. The training covers pesticide basics, methodology, training regulations and a step-by-step process for how to host such events.

During the first day, participants are divided into two smaller groups of 15 people each. Two trainers are assigned to two training modules each (see illustration on page 21). The four distinct modules run about 90 minutes each. There is no time for a participant to get bored. On Day 1, individuals stay engaged by moving from one curriculum-packed module to the next. Then, on Day 2, participants become the "trainer."

Participants take part in a dry run exercise where they teach pesticide safety training before an audience.

COVERING A RANGE OF TOPICS

This training goes beyond the training scope of the WPS. It not only provides basic details about WPS training requirements, but it also provides valuable information to new trainers who want to avoid difficulties at an actual training event.

TRAINING IS A HOME RUN FOR ALL

Employers benefit when a qualified trainer conducts safety workshops. A trained employee is much less likely to have a workplace accident that could result in lost time from work, an increase in worker's compensation insurance rates, and possible legal actions.

Onsite training gives field workers and pesticide handlers a greater knowledge of potential risks associated with handling product or working in areas where spraying has occurred. Among other issues, participants will learn the following:

- How to read/understand pesticide labels
- WPS requirements
- Proper use and selection of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- How to adequately clean protective and application equipment
- Avoid pesticide drift
- Proper disposal of pesticides and their containers
- How to properly and safely follow mixing and loading procedures
- The importance of having a qualified individual onsite to answer questions/concerns



The Train the Trainer program combines classroom, role-playing and hands-on activities.

While the knowledge and skills in the above list are specifically geared to handlers, field workers also become steeped in the same information. In addition, field workers learn:

- When and in what form pesticides can be found at the workplace

- How to avoid pesticide exposures
- Where to find information about pesticide applications
- The meaning of posted signs
- What the restricted entry interval means
- How to avoid taking pesticides (residue) home

Pesticide safety training that takes place onsite has been a boon to employers, handlers and field workers alike. In order to ensure personal, family and community safety, all three players must fully grasp the potential risks associated with handling or working near pesticides. In the end, *Train the Trainer* is a home run for all. 🏆

For information, contact
Flor Tovar, (509) 662-0590
ftovar@agr.wa.gov

Train-the-Trainer Course Modules

Basic Pesticide Information

- Definition of pesticides
- Pesticide types/formulation
- Toxicity level
- Pesticide labels
- Benefits/risks of pesticides, site risk assessment
- Planning a training

Training Methodology

- Create a good learning environment
- Make training interactive
- Public speaking
- Make training practical, relevant and useful
- Handling difficult people

Federal & State Regulations

- WPS regulations & components
- WPS training requirements for field workers (11 pts.)
- WPS training requirements for pesticide handlers (13 pts.)

Training process

- Sensitivity to language, culture and literacy
- Overcoming language barriers
- Training without personal agendas
- Self motivation
- Respect for growers & workers

Heads up to Ag owners: No exemptions from WPS equipment requirements

Although agricultural owners and their immediate families are exempt from many of the requirements of the Worker Protection Standard (WPS), they are *not* exempt from wearing label-required personal protection equipment (PPE), including that required in the "Agricultural Use Requirements" section of the label. Agricultural owners are those who own, lease, or rent and who actively manage an agricultural establishment covered by the WPS.

These individuals must also comply with restricted entry intervals and all PPE requirements for early entry. Except in very limited, no-contact situations, they may not enter treated areas during the first four hours following a pesticide application. They must wait at least

until either the inhalation exposure level on the product labeling has been reached or any WPS ventilation criteria have been met. If performing short-term (non-hand-labor) early entry tasks, they may not remain in a treated area under an REI for more than one hour in any 24-hour period. In addition, they must follow any restrictions specified in any special exceptions or on the pesticide labeling.

A complete copy of Washington state's WPS, WAC 16-233, is available at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/wac/index.cfm?fuseaction=chapterdigest&chapter=16-233>. WACs 16-233-110 and 205 detail the exemptions for agricultural owners and their families. For further information, contact Compliance Services toll-free (877) 301-4555. 🏆

Growers fall out of compliance on label training

Recent Worker Protection Standard inspections by WSDA compliance staff have revealed a high level of non-compliance with label training requirements. Growers consistently fail to provide their handler employees with label-specific training prior to performing handling tasks: mixing, loading, or applying pesticides, repair of pesticide contaminated equipment, etc. Insufficient or no training may result in direct contact with pesticide residues and potential health problems to the handler and/or general public.

Specifically, the agricultural employer must inform handler employees — in a manner they understand — about labeling requirements on the safe

handling of each pesticide used. At a minimum, this training should include:

- the signal word
- human hazard statements and precautions
- personal protective equipment requirements
- first aid instructions
- environmental precautions
- any additional precautions about the handling task to be performed.

Lastly, the employer must ensure that the handler has access to the label and has been trained in the safe and correct operation of equipment used to handle pesticides. 🏆