



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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An Equal Opportunity Employer

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Right to Know Farm Worker Training Guide

1. INTRODUCTION - Purpose

Under the Texas Agricultural Hazard Communication Law (Right to Know) the Texas Department of Agriculture and the Texas Agricultural Extension Service are required to provide training to farm workers.

This training will include information on the health effects of pesticides, how crop sheets can help workers with information on specific pesticides, ways to reduce the health risks, how to report a suspected poisoning, and other assistance and information that the Right to Know law offers for workers.

This guide has been prepared to assist trainers discuss this information with farm workers. The training program utilizes material required under the law, such as crop sheets and a slide show, and builds on the experiences that farm workers already have in working around and with pesticides.

2. HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide will help the trainer with 2 overall objectives:

1. Familiarize workers with the Right to Know law and its materials and be comfortable in using these.
2. Increase farm workers' awareness of the risks of pesticides and ways to protect themselves;

The program contains 6 sections. Each section has its objectives, discussion, and questions to help trainers in providing the information. Trainers are to use the slide show, crop sheets and other handouts to direct the discussion and participation.

Worker participation is a critical aspect of this program. Trainers should actively solicit and encourage workers to share their experiences and ideas.

The role of the trainer is to:

- Present information to workers;
- Listen to workers;
- Discuss pesticide-related experiences; accept and encourage questions from workers;
- Clarify ideas/information provided;
- Fill any information gaps where necessary;
- Pull ideas together to arrive at the objective of each session.

Trainers' Instructions:

- A. Prepare necessary material
 - set out sign-in sheets
 - photocopy handouts/prepare packets
 - check & test run equipment.
- B. Leave early to site of session to set up equipment & lay out material.

PROTECTING FARM WORKERS HEALTH & SAFETY
AROUND PESTICIDES

I. INTRODUCTION TO TRAINING

- A. What the Right to Know Law means for workers
- B. Workers experiences with pesticides

II. WORKER HEALTH & PESTICIDES

- A. Job Activities that can expose workers
- B. Routes of Exposure
- C. Pesticides can cause short term health effects
- D. Pesticides can cause death
- E. Pesticides can cause long term health effects

III. WAYS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF EXPOSURE

- A. Importance of Reentry Intervals (periods)
- B. On the job safety
 - 1. Washing hands to remove any pesticide residue
 - 2. Importance of wearing protective clothing
 - 3. Washing clothes separately from family's clothes
 - 4. The danger of reusing pesticide containers.
- C. Special precautions for children and pregnant women

IV. INFORMATION FOR FARM WORKERS UNDER THE AGRICULTURAL
RIGHT TO KNOW LAW

- A. Receiving Crop Sheets
- B. Right to ask & receive Workplace Chemical List &
Material Safety Data Sheets
- C. Right to be informed about reentry intervals
 - 1. When a field has been sprayed & when workers can
enter a field to work;
 - 2. When future applications will be made to a field.

V. FIRST AID

- A. Personal Care
- B. Seeing a doctor and obtaining needed information
- C. Paying for medical bills

VI. REPORTING A POISONING OR SUSPECTED VIOLATION OF THE LAW

- A. Filing a complaint with TDA and remaining anonymous
- B. Right to a designated representative
- C. Using 1-800# or local TDA offices for assistance or information
- D. Rights under other Texas Pesticide laws (reentry, etc)

VII. SUMMARY

- A. Final information and handouts

I. INTRODUCTION TO TRAINING

OBJECTIVES OF THIS SECTION (FOR GROUP):

1. Worker & Trainer introductions
2. Introduce the Right to Know law
3. Share experiences with pesticide exposure
4. Present Slide show

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:

1. Easel, flipchart & felt pen.
2. slide show
3. Attendance sheet

INFORMATION TO DISCUSS

- A. What the Right to Know law means for workers:
1. The law came into existence in 1988.
 2. Workers will receive information about the pesticides used on Texas fruits and vegetables and how they can protect themselves.
 3. Training sessions are being held all over the state, by both TDA and the Agricultural Extension Service.

Workers will receive information on:

- What "crop sheets" are and what kind of information they have about pesticides;
 - Workers' rights to receive other pesticide information, like a Workplace Chemical List and Material Safety Data Sheets.
 - How to file a complaint with TDA if you are poisoned or exposed to pesticides
- B. Workers experiences with pesticides
1. Solicit experiences from workers
 - a. Ask group:
Have you ever seen pesticides being sprayed?
Location of sprayer - what they saw, smelled, heard???

Trainer should cover the following points:

2. Pesticide use in the U.S.

- a. Millions of pounds of pesticides are used every year on crops in the United States to kill pests and plant disease of all kinds and help farmers grow their crops.

- b. Farm workers can come into contact with these pesticides in many different ways - they can get the pesticide on their skin if they enter a field too soon after its been sprayed, they sometimes get the drift from a neighboring field;their are many ways that workers can get pesticides on their bodies.

- c. Introduce the slide show: The slide show discusses what happened when a family was poisoned by pesticides and how the new law can help workers if this should happen to them.

-C. Present slide show

- Tell workers that after the slide show you will review the information presented
- Continue to Part II

II. WORKER HEALTH & PESTICIDES

GROUP OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SECTION:

1. Recognize job activities that can expose workers.
2. Recognize common physical routes of exposure.
3. Recognize short term (acute) symptoms of pesticide poisonings.
4. Be aware of the long term health effects of pesticides.

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:

1. Enlarged crop sheet - front & back.
2. Individual crop sheets to hand out to group.

INFORMATION TO DISCUSS

A. Routes of Exposure

1. Ask group: What are some of the ways that pesticides can enter your body?

Trainer should cover the following points:

- a. Pesticides can enter your body through the skin, lungs eyes and the mouth.
- b. The most common route of exposure for farm workers is by the skin.

B. Methods of exposure

1. Ask group: What kinds of work activities do you do that could put you into contact with pesticides?

Trainer should cover the following points:

-
- a. Workers can have contact with pesticides in many job activities:
- can be sprayed directly by a plane or from drift from a neighboring field;
 - contact with residues on plants in jobs such as harvesting, weeding, hoeing, planting, packing, etc.

 - entering fields after they have been sprayed; without protective clothing and sometimes even with protective clothing;
 - drinking water that could have pesticides; example is canal or irrigation water;
 - eating contaminated food; fruit or vegetables from sprayed fields;
 - reusing pesticide containers that may still have pesticide residues;
 - and workers who live near in labor camps or homes near fields may also be exposed to pesticide drift.

C. Short Term Health Effects

1. Ask group: Do all pesticides have the same health effects-
True or False?
-

Trainer should cover the following points:

- a. FALSE
All pesticides are poisonous but not all have the same health effects. Some pesticides will cause you to have headaches and nausea and others may give you a rash. Different types of pesticides can give you different symptoms.
- b. Refer to Crop Sheet. Discuss the pesticide information provided which tells workers that

pesticides have different danger levels - meaning of skull and crossbone vs. hand.

The crop sheet lists some of the most frequently used pesticides on a crop.

2. Short term or acute health effects will usually appear within a short time (usually within 24 hours) after exposure.
3. Some of the immediate symptoms of pesticide poisoning are irritation of eyes or throat, itching or rash, headaches, blurry vision, dizziness, excessive sweating, vomiting and chest pains.
 - Refer to Maria & her family in slide show as an example. Maria and her family experienced nausea and headaches after working in a field that had been recently sprayed.
4. Death is also an "acute effect"; some pesticides can kill you. It is critical for you to see a doctor if you begin feeling the symptoms of a poisoning.
 - Discuss Zacarias Ruiz's experience mentioned in the slide show. Mr. Ruiz and his fellow worker did not receive protective clothing, the pesticide soaked his clothes and skin and after a few days, it killed him.

D. Pesticides can cause long term health effects.

1. Ask group: What kinds of long term illnesses are pesticides suspected of causing?

----- Trainer should cover the following points: -----

- a. Long Term or chronic health effects usually take awhile to appear - maybe months or years and may be permanent.
 - example: smoking and lung disease.

b. Some pesticides are suspected, and in some cases known to cause birth defects, cancer, reproductive effects, skin or eye problems, and injury to internal organs.

- example: discuss the concern by Dolores, the pregnant woman in the slide show.

III. REDUCING THE RISKS OF EXPOSURE

GROUP OBJECTIVES:

1. Recognize importance of knowing reentry intervals
2. Identify safe work practices workers can follow to reduce pesticide risks.

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:

1. Plastic or rubber gloves.

INFORMATION TO DISCUSS:

A. Reentry Periods

1. Ask group: Have you ever entered a field or work area that you thought had recently been sprayed? How could you tell? What did you see?smell?feel?

Trainer should cover the following points:

- a. Its very dangerous for anyone to enter a field after its been sprayed. The more recent the spraying, the greater the risk of getting sick from the pesticide. Pesticide residues remain that could harm your health.
 - b. Pesticide residues or what remains after a spraying can sometimes be seen - wet leaves, sometimes you may see the spraying equipment in the area, or you may smell the pesticide, but some pesticides don't have a smell. Look for signs if you think you are entering a field that was recently sprayed. Never enter a field if you see a sign posted at the entrance to a field that tells you to "Keep Out."
- Refer to Bobby in slide show as an example. He talked about his experience of having entered fields

fields where the leaves were still wet and the pesticide smell was still present.

2. Ask group: What should workers do if they think a field is unsafe?

Trainer should cover the following points:

- a. Talk with the foreman or the farmer about the safety of working in that field. Ask about any recent sprayings.
- b. Under the Right to Know law, farmers are required to let workers know about when a pesticide was last applied, and when a pesticide is scheduled to be applied.
- c. Refer to the importance of reading the "months applied" and reentry information on the Crop Sheet. The "months applied" section will tell workers when those pesticides listed are probably applied. The "Do Not Enter Sprayed Fields" section will tell workers how long they need to wait before entering a sprayed field.

B. On the Job Safety

1. Ask group: What are some of the things you can do to reduce the risks of being exposed or poisoned by pesticides?

Trainer should cover the following points:

- a. Wash your hands to remove any pesticide residues that might be on them before eating, drinking, smoking, or using the bathroom.
- b. Always wear long sleeved shirt, long pants, socks with shoes and a hat or scarf. Wear gloves and boots if the farmer tells you that these are necessary.

If you are entering a recently treated field, the farmer is required to provide you with gloves and boots or any other protective clothing you might need. Wear the protective clothing so that the pesticide will stay off your skin.

- For special emphasis, the trainer should display the plastic or rubber gloves.
- c. Wash your work clothes separately from your other clothes and wash your clothes daily. Wear clean clothes as much as possible because the pesticide can gather in your clothes and eventually get on your skin.
- d. Never reuse pesticide containers. Even after washing a container thoroughly some pesticides will remain.
- e. The Field Sanitation law requires employers to provide workers with hand washing and drinking water. But for your own protection you may want to take a jug of water from home and keep it in the car or beside you in the field.

C. Protective Steps for Children and Pregnant Women

1. Women who are pregnant need to be especially careful to protect themselves against exposure to pesticides.

An unborn baby can be exposed to chemicals when they pass from a women's blood to her baby through the placenta and umbilical cord.

If a baby's system is upset during development, it can cause birth defects or other problems. The early months of the fetus' growth are especially important.

Discuss this example: Doctors advice pregnant women to avoid certain things such as liquor, cigarettes, or drugs. You should also avoid being around pesticides during

around pesticides during pregnancy because they can affect a developing baby just as seriously as drinking, smoking, or drugs.

2. Children are also very sensitive to pesticides. Their bodies are still growing and the part of their body that fights disease & infections is not as strong as an adult's.

IV. FIRST AID

GROUP OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SECTION

1. Identify steps to take if exposed or poisoned by a pesticide.
2. Learn about options to paying for medical expenses.

INFORMATION TO COVER

- A. Ask group: What should you do if you are poisoned in the field?

Trainer should cover the following points:

- a. If you get exposed to a pesticide while in the field or work area, wash/rinse off with the nearest source of clean water.
 - b. If pesticides get in your eyes, immediately rinse with clean water. Never use eye drops (i.e. Visine or Murine)
 - c. Shower as soon as possible, with soap and water. Change clothes - see doctor.
- B. Go see a doctor. Have a family member or friend take you - Don't drive yourself.
 1. Many workers may not go to a doctor immediately after they begin feeling sick (fear of losing job, no money for medical bills) but you should see a doctor as soon as possible.

2. Tell the doctor you think the pesticides in your workplace might have made you sick.
 3. Take the crop sheets with you, if available. The crop sheets can give information to your doctor about the pesticides being used on the crop you are working with and the name & phone number of your employer in case more information is needed.
 4. You may need to obtain a label from the foreman or the farmer.
 - The label will be found on the pesticide container. It should have first aid instructions to follow in case of an accident.
 5. If you are concerned about talking with the farmer or the foreman, the doctor can call the farmer directly, without identifying you.
 6. Your doctor can call a Poison Control Center for more information about pesticides. These numbers are listed on the crop sheets.
 - Point out the poison control center numbers on the crop sheet.
- C. Options to paying for medical expenses:
1. Under the Texas Workers Compensation law, your employer is required to pay for your medical expenses for any work-related injury. To have your expenses paid, you must tell your employer within thirty days of your injury. In some cases you may need to seek legal assistance.
 2. Migrant clinics - sliding fee scale.
- D. Report the exposure or poisoning to TDA or have someone call TDA for you.
1. The TDA Emergency line: 1-800-832-7347 has someone to answer your call 24 hours a day and a Spanish speaking

Spanish speaking is available if you don't speak English.

2. When you call us, a TDA employee will need to take as much information from you as possible about the incident. A full investigation will take place but during this time we will not reveal your name to your employer. Your identify will be protected.

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V. INFORMATION FOR FARM WORKERS UNDER THE AGRICULTURAL
RIGHT TO KNOW LAW

GROUP OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SECTION

1. Be familiar with the distribution of Crop Sheets, how to obtain a Workplace Chemical List, material Safety Data Sheets, and other health and safety information that workers should receive.
2. Recognize role of a Designated Representative, how to choose one and when to utilize assistance from a D.R.

MATERIAL YOU WILL NEED:

1. Enlarged copy of the Workplace Chemical List.
2. Copy of Material Safety Data Sheet.

INFORMATION TO DISCUSS

A. Distribution of Crop Sheets and Other Health & Safety Information

1. Crop Sheets will be distributed by farmers who fall under the law. Not all employers will be fall under the law. It applies mostly to larger farms - those who use a certain level of pesticides and pay out a certain amount in payroll (funds).
2. You should receive crop sheets from your employer if you have not been trained or if you ask for sheets. You should receive the sheets on the first day of the work season or the day you begin work with that employer.
3. Employers are responsible for reading the information on the sheets that are check marked and they must read it in a language the workers understand (the sheets are bilingual).
4. You will also be receiving other general health and safety information on your first payday like the TDA pamphlet that TDA has put together to inform workers about the law.

B. Right to ask and receive Workplace Chemical List and Material Safety Data Sheets

1. Workplace Chemical List will list the pesticides that your employer uses on his crops. He is required to keep this updated and give you a copy of it if you request one.
2. Material Safety Data Sheets contain detailed information about each pesticide. These will be kept with your employers workplace chemical list.
- 3 Your doctor can also obtain a copy of your employers Workplace Chemical List and the Material Safety Data Sheets if he/she asks for them.

C. Right to be informed about Reentry Periods

1. There are specific time periods before people can enter fields or other workareas after they have been treated with pesticides. This is called the reentry period.
 - Example: In Texas, workers may not enter fields for at least 24 hours after pesticides have been applied and there are some pesticides where workers must not enter fields before 2-7 days.
2. Under the Right to Know law, farmers are required to tell workers what the last and future dates of pesticide applications are for the field(s) they are or will be working in and the reentry periods for those pesticides.
3. If you are requested to enter a field or work area before the reentry period has expired then don't enter unless you are wearing special protective clothing.

VI. REPORTING A POISONING OR SUSPECTED VIOLATION OF THE LAW

- A. Ask group: What should you do if you think this law is not being followed; example: you don't receive information about an application or asked to enter a field without protective clothing and you think it was recently sprayed.

Trainer should cover the following points

1. Workers may not report a violation because they may fear loss of job or other reprisals.
Under the Right to Know law, if a worker reports a suspected violation of the law, his/her identity does not have to be known to the employer.
2. A very important part of the law is the right of workers to choose a "Designated Representative" to help them report a complaint or obtain information from their employer.
 - a. A worker's designated representative can be anyone from his/her community; example-doctor, lawyer, union leader, priest, etc.
 - b. The designated representative does not have to give the farmer the name of the worker that he/she is representing when he/she requests information needed by the worker.
 - c. A worker who gets help from a designated representative is required to sign a form giving authority to the person they choose as their representative.
3. Encourage workers to report a complaint to the Department of Agriculture if they are concerned about retaliation.

4. Refer to 1-800# on pamphlets, cards and other handouts. Reminder that the call is free, available 24 hours a day and a Spanish speaking person will be made available for those persons who need assistance in Spanish.

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