

## Revisions to Worker Protection Standards WPS Become Effective in 2017

Lee Townsend, Extension Entomologist, University of Kentucky

1992 Worker Protection Standards established specific requirements for employers to follow in order to reduce the potential for worker exposure to pesticides. Revisions to these standards will go into effect January 2, 2017. They will give farm workers health protections similar to those that are already afforded to workers in other industries.

- **Annual mandatory training** to inform farm workers regarding required protections afforded to them. Currently, training is only once every 5 years.
- **Expanded training** includes instructions to reduce take-home exposure from pesticides on work clothing and other safety topics.
- First-time ever minimum age requirement: **Children under 18 are prohibited from handling pesticides.**
- **Expanded mandatory posting** of no-entry signs for the most hazardous pesticides. The signs prohibit entry into pesticide-treated fields until residues decline to a safe level.
- **New no-entry application-exclusion zones** up to 100 feet surrounding pesticide application equipment will protect workers and others from exposure to pesticide overspray.
- **Requirement to provide more than one way** for farm workers and their representatives to gain access to pesticide application information and safety data sheets – centrally posted or by requesting records.
- **Mandatory record-keeping** to improve states' ability to follow up on pesticide violations and enforce compliance. Records of application-specific pesticide information, as well as farm worker training, must be kept for 2 years.
- **Anti-retaliation provisions** are comparable to Department of Labor's (DOL).
- **Changes in personal protective equipment** will be consistent with DOL's standards for ensuring respirators are effective, including fit test, medical evaluation, and training.
- **States specific amounts of water** to be used for routine washing, emergency eye flushing, and other decontamination, including eye wash systems for handlers at pesticide mixing/loading sites.
- **Continue the exemption** for farm owners and their immediate families with an expanded definition of immediate family.

[A quick reference guide to the revised WPS is available online.](#)