

Safety Note #159

PESTICIDE HANDLER DECONTAMINATION FACILITIES



Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) employees may perform pesticide handling and application operations, including mixing/loading and spraying. Accidental pesticide exposure may result in burns to the eyes and body. About 15-20 percent of burns to the face involve at least one eye (WebMD). Although many burns result in only minor discomfort, every pesticide exposure or burn to the face and body must be taken seriously. Permanent damage is possible to both the eyes and body and can be life altering.

Dept. of Pesticide Regulation - Pesticide Handler Decontamination Requirements

- California Code of Regulations, Title 3, Section 6734 [CCR/3-6734] requires the employer to assure that there is sufficient water, soap and single use towels for routine washing and for emergency eye flushing and washing of the entire body.
- The water shall be of a quality and temperature that will not cause illness or injury when it contacts the skin or eyes or if it is swallowed, and shall be stored separate for that used of mixing with pesticides.
- One clean change of coveralls shall be available at each decontamination site.
- The decontamination site shall be at the mixing/loading site and not more than ¼ mile (or at the nearest point of vehicular access) for other handlers.
- The decontamination site shall not be in an area being treated with pesticides or under a restricted entry interval unless:
 1. All the handlers for whom the decontamination site is provided are working in that area being treated or under a restricted entry interval.
 2. The soap, towels, and extra change of coveralls are in an enclosed container
 3. The water is running tap water or enclosed in a container.
- One pint of water for emergency eye flushing shall be immediately available (carried by the handler or on the vehicle) to each worker handling pesticides if the pesticide labeling requires protective eyewear.

NOTE – ANR EH&S strongly recommends having, in addition to a one-pint flush bottle, a portable eyewash unit which meets the requirements of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z358.1 for eyewash stations to provide at a minimum, a 15 minute flush time rate. Some pesticides can be very corrosive, and severely irritating to the eyes and skin, or are toxic by skin absorption, thus one pint of water might not be enough to protect the eyes and skin from damage prior to medical attention.