

Guide to Pesticide Safety

in Canada

Pesticide laws protect the health and safety of all workers in Canada, regardless of citizenship or status. Pesticide regulation exists at all government levels.

Pesticide laws will be enforced in your workplace even if you are a foreign worker or do not have a valid work permit.

What are pesticides?

Pesticides are chemicals used to kill bugs, weeds, and other pests.

Pesticides can hurt or kill you.

Pesticides can be anywhere on farms and in forests, nurseries, and greenhouses.

Pesticides can be in:

- plants, dirt or irrigation water;
- farm or irrigation equipment;
- places where pesticides are stored or have been stored;
- places where pesticides are loaded, mixed, or thrown away;
- cars or trucks that carry pesticides;
- gear and equipment used to apply, mix, or handle pesticides.

What do pesticides look like?

Pesticides come in different shapes, sizes, and forms.

Pesticides can look like:

- a liquid that is sprayed or poured on plants and soil;
- a powder put on plants and soil;
- little pebbles, pellets, or grain;
- a gas or fog that is sprayed, let go, or injected into plants and soil.



Are there agencies and laws that cover pesticides?

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) protects human health and safety and the environment by regulating pesticides that are sold, used, or imported into Canada.

The PMRA works with a federal law called the *Pest Control Products Act* (PCP Act). Under this law and related regulations, any pesticide sold, used, or imported into Canada must be registered by the PMRA.

Who protects workers from pesticides?

Provincial, territorial and federal workplace health and safety agencies help protect workers who work with or near pesticides. Health and safety laws and regulations establish additional safety rules for workplaces in which pesticides are found. For health and safety information, and to find out what laws apply in your workplace, contact your provincial or territorial agency (if you work in a federally regulated occupation, contact the regional office of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada).

Who enforces pesticide laws?

Federal and provincial pesticide officials make sure the registration requirements under the PCP Act are followed. PMRA and other officials investigate the use, sale and import of pesticides.

Punishments for violating the PCP Act include fines of up to \$50,000 and even imprisonment. Employers are also responsible for violations committed by their employees.

Who should I call if I have questions about pesticides?

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency provides workers, employers, and the general public with a wide range of pesticide information.

The PMRA can be contacted from anywhere in Canada toll free at: 1-800-267-6315.



The importance of pesticide regulation

Safe pesticide use benefits everyone

- Pesticide safety rules are good for workers' health and good for business.
- Safe pesticide use helps to protect workers, their families, and the public from harmful exposure to pesticides.
- Workers and employers must all make sure that pesticides are being used safely in the workplace.

The dangers of unsafe pesticide use are real

- Workers exposed to pesticides under unsafe conditions may suffer short-term and long-term health problems.
- Pesticide poisoning can cause serious illness and even death.
- Pesticides can destroy a worker's ability to have children.
- Workers exposed to unsafe levels of pesticides can endanger their families when they come home from work. Children are often at greater risk from pesticide exposure, and even low levels of pesticides can create serious health risks.
- Unsafe pesticide use damages our environment.

Follow the instructions on the label

The PMRA requires that all pesticides be labelled. This labelling must include instructions for the safe storage and use of the pesticide. These instructions must be followed to ensure your safety and the safety of others.

Provincial and territorial pesticide laws

Provincial and territorial governments make rules regarding the sale, use, storage, transportation, and disposal of pesticides.

These laws help to ensure the safe and responsible use of pesticides.

- These laws work together with the federal PCP Act.
- Provincial and territorial laws can create stricter requirements but cannot reduce the requirements of federal laws in this area.

These laws generally provide that:

- agricultural employers and workers who buy, store and apply pesticides must go through a training and certification process;
- pesticide users must follow the rules that describe under what conditions pesticides may be purchased, transported, stored and applied;
- workers must have and use all the protective equipment that is required when using a specific pesticide;
- vendors must also be trained and certified to sell certain products;
- permits are required for the application of certain pesticides as well as for the mode of application.

These laws are enforced by investigators who inspect pesticide practices in workplaces. Inspectors can refuse, cancel and suspend licenses when they find that pesticides are being mishandled. Inspectors can also issue penalties for violations of pesticide laws and regulations. Penalties generally include both fines and imprisonment.

How can I protect myself from pesticides?

The best way to stop pesticides from harming you is to protect yourself.

Ask whether pesticides are used at your job.

Always read the label on the pesticide and follow all the safety rules.

Wear clothes to protect yourself.

Cover your skin with clothes like:

- Hat or cap
- Long-sleeved shirt
- Gloves
- Long pants
- Shoes and socks

Wash your hands and face before:

- Eating or drinking
- Touching another person
- Smoking
- Chewing gum or tobacco
- Using the toilet

You should:

- never put pesticides on yourself;
- stay out of places where pesticides are being used;
- get out of places where pesticides drift onto you;
- never take pesticides or pesticide containers home with you;
- wash your whole body and put on clean clothes after work;
- keep dirty work clothes away from family clothes before you wash them;
- keep children away from pesticides at all times.



How do I know if I have been harmed by pesticides?

Pesticides can be very dangerous, and they can harm you in many ways.

Pesticides harm both men and women.

Pesticides can:

- Hurt your nose
- Hurt your throat
- Hurt your eyes
- Cause rashes on your skin
- Cause your muscles to twitch
- Cause your urine to look smoky
- Cause your nose to run
- Cause your body to shake
- Cause your stomach to hurt
- Cause permanent brain damage
- Cause problems with seeing
- Cause problems with thinking
- Give you a headache
- Give you muscle pains
- Give you cramps
- Give you blisters
- Give you ulcers
- Give you a heart attack
- Make you feel sick
- Make you sweat a lot
- Make you feel dizzy
- Make you drool
- Make you have trouble breathing
- Make it hard for you to speak
- Make you confused

There is not enough room in this guide to list all the ways that pesticides can hurt you!



**Protect yourself
at all times and
follow all safety
rules!**

Pesticides can hurt you years later

Pesticides can hurt you months or years after they get on your skin or in your eyes, mouth or lungs.

Pesticides can:

- Give you cancer
- Hurt your kidneys
- Hurt your liver
- Hurt your nervous system
- Cause birth defects in your children

Contact your provincial and territorial pesticide and health and safety agencies

Alberta

Pesticide Agency: Alberta Environment

- 1-800-222-6514 (toll free in Alberta)
- (780) 944-0313

Workplace Health and Safety: Human Resources and Employment, Workplace Health

- 1-866-415-8690 (toll free in Alberta)
- (780) 415-8690

British Columbia

Pesticide Agency: Integrated Pest Management Program

- 1-800-663-7687 (toll free in BC; ask to be transferred to the Integrated Pest Management Program)
- (250) 387-4441

Workplace Health and Safety: Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia

- 1-888-621-SAFE (toll free in BC)
1-888-621-7233
- (604) 276-3100

Manitoba

Pesticide Agency: Manitoba Agriculture and Food, Soils and Crops Branch

- 1-800-282-8069 (toll free in Manitoba; ask to be transferred to 945-7067)
- (204) 945-7067 or 7706

Workplace Health and Safety

- 1-800-282-8069 (toll free in Manitoba)
- (204) 945-3446

New Brunswick

Pesticide Agency: Pesticides Management,
Department of the Environment and Local
Government

- 1-800-561-4036 (toll free in New Brunswick)
- (506) 453-2690

Workplace Health and Safety: Workplace Health,
Safety and Compensation Commission

- 1-800-222-9775 (toll free in New Brunswick)
- (506) 632-2200

Newfoundland and Labrador

Pesticide Agency: The Pesticides Control Section
(PCS), Department of Environment:

- St John's: (709) 729-5782 or 2556

Workplace Health and Safety: Workplace Health,
Safety and Compensation Commission

- 1-800-563-9000 (toll free in Newfoundland)
- (709) 778-1000

Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Pesticide Agencies:

Northwest Territories: Environmental Protection
Service, Department of Resources, Wildlife and
Economic Development

- (867) 873-7654

Nunavut: Department of Sustainable
Development, Environmental Protection Service

- (867) 975-5907

Workplace Health and Safety: Northwest
Territories Workers' Compensation Board

- 1-800-661-0792 (toll free across Canada)

Nova Scotia

Pesticide Agency: Department of Environment
and Labour

- (902) 424-5300

Workplace Health and Safety: Occupational
Health and Safety Division

- 1-800-9-LABOUR (1-800-952-2687, toll free in
Nova Scotia)
- (902) 424-5400

Ontario

Pesticide Agency: Public Information Centre,
Ministry of the Environment

- 1-800-565-4923 (toll free in Ontario, press 0
and ask for the Pesticide Agency)
- (416) 325-4000 (outside Ontario)

This pesticide agency deals only with licensing
issues. Workers wanting information or help
have to go to the Ministry of Labour (below).

Workplace Health and Safety: Occupational
Health and Safety Branch

- (416) 235-5330 (Central Region: Toronto,
Peel, York, Barrie, Durham)
- (613) 228-8050 (Eastern Region: Ottawa,
Kingston, Peterborough)
- (705) 564-7400 (Northern Region: Sudbury,
Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay,
North Bay, Elliot Lake, Dryden, Kirkland
Lake, Kapuskasing)
- (905) 577-6221 (Western Region: Hamilton,
London, Brant, Halton, Niagara,
Kitchener/Waterloo, Windsor)

Farm Safety Association

- 1-800-361-8855 (toll free in Ontario, for
safety information for farm workers)

Prince Edward Island

Pesticide Agency: Agriculture and Forestry

- 1-800-454-3231 (toll free in PEI)
- (902) 368-4880

Workplace Health and Safety: Occupational
Health and Safety Branch

- 1-800-237-5049 (toll free in PEI)
- (902) 368-5562

Quebec

Pesticide Agency: Ministry of the Environment

- 1-800-561-1616 (toll free in Quebec; ask for
the regional pesticide office)
- (418) 521-3830

Workplace Health and Safety: Répertoire
Toxicologique de la CSST

- 1-888-330-6374 (toll free in Quebec)
- (514) 906-3080

Saskatchewan

Pesticide Agency: Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Inspection and Regulatory Management, Pesticide Unit

- (306) 787-2195

Workplace Health and Safety:

Saskatchewan Labour, Farm Safety Program

- 1-877-419-3510 (toll free in Saskatchewan)
- (306) 787-0920

Occupational Health and Safety Division:

- 1-800-567-7233 (toll free in Saskatchewan)
- 1-800-667-5023 (toll free in Saskatoon only)
- (306) 787-4496

Yukon

Pesticide Agency: Renewable Resources, Environmental Protection and Assessment

- (867) 667-5683

Workplace Health and Safety: Workers' Compensation, Health and Safety Board, Occupational Health and Safety Branch

- 1-800-661-0443 (toll free in Yukon)
- (867) 667-5450



Commission for Labor Cooperation