

12.0 THE WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS) is a federal regulation intended to reduce the risk of pesticide poisonings and injuries among agricultural workers who are exposed to pesticide residues. At BTI, the WPS applies to all employees, including undergraduate student employees and graduate students, who handle pesticide treated plant materials.

The WPS requires BTI to assure that untrained workers receive basic pesticide information before they work with treated agricultural plants. Anyone who has not attended the complete WPS training before initial exposure to pesticides or pesticide residues must complete a form entitled **WPS REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE BASIC PESTICIDE SAFETY INFORMATION TO UNTRAINED WORKERS**.

WPS REQUIREMENT BASIC TRAINING

Employees must attend WPS training **before** working in any greenhouse that has been sprayed with pesticides for 30 days after the REI. Certified pesticide applicators do not need to attend this training.

All individuals who work in a greenhouse must be aware of:

- The location of the central posting board for their work area. The central posting board contains pesticide safety information, emergency numbers, and a pesticide application list for the facility.
- The need to attend and understand WPS training
- The location of a decontamination site, equipped with clean water, soap and single use towels, and a change of clothes (e.g., a coverall or Tyvek suit).
- Their right to receive emergency assistance should there be reason to believe that they have been poisoned or injured by a pesticide.
- The required posting of all greenhouse applications (the “Keep Out” sign).
- The severe restrictions on access to treated areas during the restricted entry interval (REI).

More about REIs

Access to greenhouses is severely restricted during a restricted entry interval (REI) when the “Keep Out” sign is posted on the greenhouse door. The WPS allows entry into a treated area that remains under a REI only in three specific work situations:

- Short term tasks that last less than 1 hour and do not involve hand labor,
- Emergency tasks that take place because of an agricultural emergency, and
- Specific tasks approved by EPA through a formal exception process.

Anyone that must perform an early entry task must:

- Wait at least 4 hours after the pesticide application is completed, and
- Wait at least until any inhalation exposure level listed on the product labeling has been reached or any WPS ventilation criteria have been met, and
- Spend no more than 1 hour in a 24-hour period on short term early entry tasks or do only those tasks relating to mitigating an emergency situation.

Anyone performing early entry work must be provided with:

- Personal protective equipment
- Any protections required by the pesticide labeling for early entry tasks
- Protections that are the same as for other workers:
- Information at a central location
- Emergency assistance
- Restrictions during applications
- Notice about applications
- Training and instructions
- Decontamination sites

BTI strongly discourages any greenhouse entry during a restricted entry interval.

More information about the Worker Protection Standard is available from the greenhouse manager or you can go to the EPA Worker Protection Standard at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/agricultural-worker-protection-standard-wps>