

Washing Pesticide Work Clothing

If you work with pesticides, your work clothes can get pesticides on them. This can happen if you wear coveralls or other personal protective equipment (PPE) over your own clothes. This handout tells you how to clean your work clothes. If you don't wash your clothes, the pesticides on them can make you sick. If your dirty clothes are mixed with your family's clothes at home, your family could get sick, too. Follow these directions to protect yourself and your family from pesticides.

Wear Clean Work Clothes Every Day

Wash clothes that have pesticides on them as soon as you can. The longer you wait, the harder it is to wash the pesticide off. If you keep wearing the clothes and get more pesticide on them, you could get sick because the pesticides can get into your body through your skin. When you come home from work, do not hug, or touch your family until you have changed out of your work clothes. Shower and wash your hair. This is to protect your family from pesticides.

Before You Wash Your Clothes

- You cannot get all the pesticides off leather items such as watchbands, belts and boots. You must throw them away if you have pesticides on them. If you wear them again and sweat, the pesticide can get in your body through your skin.
- If you have pesticide powder or granules on your clothes, shake them off before you leave work. Pay special attention to your cuffs and pockets.
- Keep all clothes with pesticides on them in closed plastic bags. Until you are ready to wash the clothes, keep the bags outside the house. Make sure children and pets cannot get to the bags.
- Tell the person that does the laundry at home that your clothes have pesticides on them. Explain how to wash them.

When You Wash Your Clothes

- Do not mix clothes with pesticides on them with your family's laundry. They must not be washed together, or pesticides can get on your family's clothes and make them sick.
- Try to dump the clothes straight from the plastic bag into the washer, without touching the laundry.
- If you must touch the pesticide exposed work clothes, wear rubber gloves. Then wash the gloves, take them off, and throw them away. Then wash your hands and arms.
- Put only a few things in the washer at one time. This helps get them clean.
- Use the longest cycle, and **LOTS** of **HOT** water. Cold water will not do a good job taking out pesticides.
- Use a strong detergent. You can use bleach if you want, but it does not help take out pesticides.

After You Wash Your Clothes

- Before you use the washing machine again, clean it by running it with no clothes – only hot water and detergent.
- Dry your clothes on a line, outside if you can. The sun will help get rid of any pesticides that are left.

- If you dry the clothes in a dryer, run it until the clothes are completely dry. Then run the empty dryer for 10 minutes.

What If I Spill Pesticides on My Clothes?

If the spilled pesticide is full strength, not diluted with water, take the clothes off right away. Do not try to clean them. Instead, you must throw them away.

Washing Pesticide Work Clothing Summary

- Wear rubber gloves if you must touch them.
- Keep them separate from other clothes.
- Use a pre-soak cycle or run through the wash cycle twice.
- Use the highest water level.
- Do not over fill the washing machine. More space is good.
- Use a strong detergent.
- If possible, dry the clothes outside on a line.
- Clean the washing machine by running a cycle with detergent and no clothes.
- Clean the dryer if used by running it empty for 10 minutes.

California Environmental Protection Agency
California Department of Pesticide Regulation