



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION SERIES

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY Agriculture & Natural Resources

EXTENSION ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, AUBURN UNIVERSITY, AL 36849-5647

Care Of Clothing Worn During Pesticide Application

ANR-732, 1992, Talmadge Balch, *Extension Pesticide Education Specialist (Retired)*, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Community Resource Development, Auburn University

The need for pesticide safety does not stop after the pesticide application. Protective clothing, as well as pesticide equipment, can become contaminated. Proper handling and washing of pesticide contaminated clothing is important to the protection of your health and your family's health. The following guidelines for laundering pesticide contaminated clothing are important in protecting human health.

1. Clothes worn while applying pesticides should be removed outdoors. If a granular pesticide has been used, shake clothing outdoors and empty pockets and cuffs. Wear gloves while removing clothes and shoes to help avoid pesticide contact with the hands. If fabric clothing is saturated with a highly toxic pesticide, discard the clothing. Place it immediately in a plastic trash bag; close the bag tightly and dispose of it in a solid waste landfill, if label permits. (Follow disposal directions on the pesticide label.) Remember to wear rubber, vinyl, or plastic gloves when handling severely contaminated clothing.
2. Do not put pesticide contaminated clothes with other clothes to be laundered. Have a separate covered container for them. A cardboard box lined with a garbage bag works well. The box should be disposed of at the end of the pesticide season. Never send clothing worn to apply pesticides to a commercial laundry service.
3. Wash protective clothing after each use. When clothing is repeatedly exposed or soiled, more pesticide remains in the clothing after washing, and there are higher concentrations of chemicals in the rinse water.
4. Pre-rinse clothing before washing. This helps remove a large amount of pesticide. Pre-rinsing can be done by hosing clothing off outdoors, soaking them in a tub or bucket, or using the presoak cycle in the washer.
5. Wash pesticide soiled clothing in hot water of 140 degrees or higher. Hot water removes more pesticide.
6. Use a heavy-duty liquid laundry detergent. They are better at removing pesticides and are especially helpful in removing oil-based pesticides. Use the amount of detergent recommended on the product label. Neither bleach nor ammonia seem to affect pesticide removal. (Never mix these two products together.)
7. Use the full water level on the machine, and wash only a few clothes at a time so water can circulate freely.
8. Wash clothes on the longest available cycle, and use a double rinse cycle if possible.
9. Wash the clothing 2 to 3 times. Drying is not necessary between washings.
10. Line dry clothes whenever possible. Exposure to sunlight may help break down pesticides. This will also prevent contamination of the dryer. If dryer must be used, wipe the inside of the dryer with a damp cloth after clothes have been removed.
11. Before washing the family's regular clothing, clean the washing machine by running an empty load, using hot water and detergent.
12. Thoroughly wash all boots, hats, gloves, aprons, and goggles in detergent and hot water. Test gloves for leaks by filling them with water and squeezing. Always dispose of leaky gloves.
13. If respirators are used, clean and care for them according to manufacturer's instructions.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.



[Community Resource Development homepage](#) | [CRD Publications](#)