



# Pesticide Drift Exposure Response Act

SB391 - Florez

## ◆ Californians are at risk of pesticide drift exposure

- 90% of pesticides used in California are prone to “drift” from their target. Many drift off-site for days or weeks after the application because of their high volatility or evaporation into the air.
- Hundreds of thousands of people in California live in areas where they are at risk of pesticide drift exposure.
- A third of the pesticides reported used in California are particularly hazardous, according to U.S. EPA and the state of California, capable of causing immediate poisoning (nausea, vomiting, rashes etc.), cancer, Parkinson’s disease, birth defects, sterility, neurotoxicity, and/or damage to developing children. Pesticides can also aggravate asthma and other respiratory problems.

## ◆ Hundreds poisoned in major drift incidents

- Major drift incidents have occurred in Earlimart (1999), Terra Bella (2000), Arvin (June 2002), Arvin (July 2003), Lamont (October 2003), Lamont (October 2003), Arvin (2004), Salinas (2004), Arvin (2005), Shafter (2005), Mettler (2005), Delano (2007)
- These drift incidents exposed well over a thousand people to pesticides that have resulted in short and long-term illnesses.
- Many victims of large and small incidents have been ill-treated and others ignored. Some have been left with hundreds of dollars worth of medical expenses that are never reimbursed.

## ◆ The Pesticide Drift Exposure Response Act

- The Pesticide Drift Exposure Response Act (SB391 – Florez) became law in 2005 after a series of pesticide drift incidents roused community members to speak up and persuade decision-makers to take action.
- The Pesticide Drift Exposure Response Act aims to ensure immediate and proper response to each pesticide drift incident and respectful treatment of pesticide drift victims. Under the new law, every county in California, with community member input, is required to include new pesticide drift response protocols in their emergency response plans.
- The Pesticide Drift Exposure Response Act also established a penalty process for the medical expenses of persons who have been exposed to pesticides in non-occupational drift incidents.

## ◆ More is needed to ensure victims’ medical costs are covered

- While County Agricultural Commissioners can fine pesticide drift violators, no medical expenses have been paid out under the law. Despite efforts to force legitimate payment for health costs under the law, responsible parties have refused to pay, continually appealing the court decisions that confirm their liability. Victims have been left without reimbursement of their medical bills.
- Discussion with lawmakers and regulators to solve this problem in the Pesticide Drift Exposure Response Act is under way.

### *What you can do*

- \*\* Call Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR) to get a Drift Kit, which has CAC phone numbers and information about pesticide drift and how to respond to it.
- \*\* Report drift to your County Agricultural Commissioner.
- \*\* If you have information about a drift poisoning or need assistance contact CPR.
- \*\* Find out if your county has implemented a pesticide accident emergency response plan.

**For more information** please contact Californians for Pesticide Reform’s Central Valley Coordinator: Teresa DeAnda, 661-304-4080, [teresa@igc.org](mailto:teresa@igc.org)