The Dangers of Pesticide Exposure
A Community Response Guide for the California Coast
Pesticides are chemicals that kill weeds, insects, and other pests.

Pesticides are designed to kill. Exposure to pesticides can make you sick right away and/or can be harmful to your long-term health. Pesticides are especially harmful to children.

Pesticide drift may be visible as a cloud of spray or dust, or you may notice an unpleasant smell or taste. You may even feel droplets. Pesticides can harm your health even if you don’t see, feel, taste or smell them.
Maybe it's not the flu?

Symptoms of pesticide exposure can be easily dismissed as colds, flu, diabetes, allergies, or hangovers. If you feel any of the above symptoms, especially if they appear quickly, think about where and when you may have been exposed to pesticides and see a doctor.
Some effects take months or years to show up, such as:

- Cancer
- Reproductive harm
- Nervous system problems
- Birth defects

Some effects manifest immediately, such as:

- Long-term health risks
You cannot be fired for reporting pesticide drift, whether you are sick or not. See p. 8.

By law, your County Agricultural Commissioner must tell you what pesticide was applied and must investigate. See p. 8.

Farmworkers have these rights when they are exposed to pesticides at work:

Your employer must provide transportation to the doctor or hospital.

Su empleador debe proporcionarle transporte al médico o al hospital.

Your employer must pay for your medical care.

El empleador debe pagar el cuidado médico.

You cannot be fired for reporting pesticide drift or seeking medical attention.
How Are Pesticides Applied?

- **Ground Boom Sprayer**: Sprays down toward the ground
- **Ground Air-blast Applicator**: Sprays up and out
- **Aerial Application**: Aerial application of pesticide
- **Soil Fumigation**: Sprays into the ground

¿Cómo se aplican los pesticidas?
What to Do If You Are Exposed to Pesticides

At home: Turn off your swamp cooler. Close the windows. If possible, carefully leave the area immediately. Call 911 if you are too sick to drive.

At work:
— Tell your supervisor immediately!
— Ask your supervisor what pesticide you were exposed to, and ask to be taken to a doctor.
— Tell your doctor the name of the pesticide, and ask them to report it.

Wherever you are exposed:
— Record everything and report it! See p. 8
— Change your clothes and shower with soap and warm water.
— If your clothes were hit, put them in a paper bag inside a plastic bag for possible testing.
By law, physicians must report suspected pesticide illnesses within 24 hours:
https://oehha.ca.gov/pesticides/pesticide-illness-surveillance-pesticide-illness-reporting

Tell the doctor what happened and what pesticides were involved.

Who will pay your medical bill?
If you were exposed at work, workers' compensation insurance is required to pay. If you were not at work, the applicator or farmer may have to pay anything not covered by insurance.

Make sure the doctor reports the illness, as required by law.*
Follow up with the County Ag Commissioner.

Tell the doctor what happened and what pesticides were involved.

*By law, physicians must report suspected pesticide illnesses within 24 hours:
https://oehha.ca.gov/pesticides/pesticide-illness-surveillance-pesticide-illness-reporting
https://oehha.ca.gov/pesticides/pesticide-illness-surveillance-pesticide-illness-reporting
If you are seriously ill, call 911.

Write everything down! See p. 9-10

Download the CASPIR app from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. You can use the app to report location and details, or send a video report. The state will notify your Ag Commissioner.

Always Report Pesticide Drift!

How to Report:

1. Call the County Agricultural Commissioner (see p. 12 for contact numbers). It is their job to take your report and investigate.
2. Llame al Departamento del Agro del Condado (ver p. 12 para los contactos). Es su trabajo tomar su reporte y investigar.
3. Descargue la aplicación CASPIR del Departamento de Regulación de Pesticidas de California. Puede usar la aplicación para reportar la ubicación y los detalles, o enviar un reporte en video. El Estado notificará a su Comisionado de Agricultura.
4. Llame al 911 si está gravemente enfermo/endeble, llame 911.

Cuándo ver al médico / Cuándo reportar la dispersión de pesticidas
Record Everything!

Don’t worry if you don’t know all the answers, just record as much as you can. Keep any photos or videos, and make copies of the form for others to fill out, if needed. You can also submit photos or a video report on the CASPIR app, which maps where the drift happened.

Recording Form for Pesticide Exposure

1. Your name: _____________________________________________________________

2. Date of pesticide exposure: ____________ (month/day/year) Time: ___________ am/pm

3. The exposure happened while:  □ Working    □ Driving    □ At Home
   □ At School    □ Other ____________________________________________________

4. Location of exposure: (Be specific! Address, intersection, part of highway, school name, field block, residence, name of farm labor contractor or grower if known, etc.)
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

5. Weather conditions at time of exposure: □ No Wind
   □ Wind: From what direction?_________ How Strong?  Light / Medium / Strong
   □ Fog      □ Other __________________________________________________________

6. Did you feel, smell or taste anything at the time of exposure?   □ No   □ Yes
   If yes, what did it feel, smell or taste like? ________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________

7. What pesticide(s)? (if known) ____________________________________________

8. Describe the exposure: (What were you doing? Was it a gas, a spray, from a helicopter, etc.?)________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________

9. Did you see the pesticide being applied? If so, describe how (helicopter, tractor, sprayer, etc.) and estimate how far away it was. _________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________________

Record Everything!

Don’t worry if you don’t know all the answers, just record as much as you can. Keep any photos or videos, and make copies of the form for others to fill out, if needed. You can also submit photos or a video report on the CASPIR app, which maps where the drift happened.
10. Who was exposed? Write the names and contact information of all people you know were exposed. Continue on the back or on another page if you need more space.

Name ___________________________ Contact Info ___________________________

Name ___________________________ Contact Info ___________________________

Name ___________________________ Contact Info ___________________________

11. What symptoms did you and others experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>(who?)</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>(who?)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dizziness</td>
<td>Onset of asthma attack</td>
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<td>Dizziness</td>
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<td>Headache</td>
<td>Tingling or numbness</td>
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<td>Burning eyes</td>
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<td>Headache</td>
<td>Tingling or numbness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stomach ache/nausea</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stomach ache/nausea</td>
<td>Chemical taste in your mouth, sore throat</td>
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<tr>
<td>nausea</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diarrhea</td>
<td>Difficulty breathing</td>
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<td>Diarrhea</td>
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<td>Vomiting</td>
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<td>Vomiting</td>
<td>or shortness of breath</td>
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<td>Fainting</td>
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<td>Fainting</td>
<td>Disorientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rash/Irritation</td>
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<td>Rash/Irritation</td>
<td>Allergy-like reaction (sneezing &amp; runny, itchy nose)</td>
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Follow up!

If you were exposed at work, did you tell your supervisor?  □ Yes  □ No

Did you save clothes that might have been contaminated in a bag? □ Yes  □ No

Remember to report drift and exposure to the County Agricultural Commissioner immediately. Call community support groups if you need help! (see page 14.)

Who I called | Date & time of call | What did they say?
-------------------------------------------------------------
|                |                    |                        |
|                |                    |                        |
|                |                    |                        |
To report pesticide drift, download the Department of Pesticide Regulation’s CASPIR app on your mobile device. You can file a report anonymously, provide the exact location of the incident, and upload photos and videos.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Agricultural Commissioner Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monterey</td>
<td>(831) 759-7325</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>(858) 694-2739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Luis Obispo</td>
<td>(805) 781-5910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Barbara</td>
<td>(805) 681-5600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz</td>
<td>(831) 763-8080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoma</td>
<td>(707) 565-2371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventura</td>
<td>(805) 388-4222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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If the County Agricultural Commissioner does not respond to your request, call the California Department of Pesticide Regulation and ask for enforcement.

**State of California Department of Pesticide Regulation Offices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Agricultural Commissioner Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento Headquarters</td>
<td>(916) 324-4100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Regional Office, Fresno</td>
<td>(559) 297-3511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Regional Office</td>
<td>(916) 603-7703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Regional Office</td>
<td>(714) 279-7690</td>
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For Farmworkers Exposed to Pesticide Drift in the Field or at Home

California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.

Oxnard .................................................................(805) 486-1068
Salinas ...............................................................(831) 757-5221
San Luis Obispo .................................................(805) 544-7997
Santa Maria .........................................................(805) 922-4564
Santa Rosa ...........................................................(707) 528-9941
Vista ....................................................................(760) 966-0511
Watsonville ...........................................................(831) 724-2253

United Farm Workers of America

UFW Foundation Worker’s Rights Call Center
(877) 881-8281

United Farm Workers of America Headquarters
(661) 823-6105

Pesticide Information Online
www.pesticideinfo.org
Search this website for information about pesticide use in California and health effects of specific pesticides.
You Are Not Alone
For help reporting drift, to get involved, or if you have questions, these organizations are here for you.

**Californians for Pesticide Reform**  
(Statewide)  
(510) 788-9025

**California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation**  
(Statewide)  
(916) 446-7904 ext.110

**Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy**  
(Ventura and Santa Barbara)  
(805) 658-0810

**Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO)**  
(Monterey and Santa Cruz)  
(Spanish, Mixteco, Zapoteco, Tlapaneco, and Triqui spoken)  
(831) 585-3411

**Lideres Campesinas**  
(Statewide)  
(805) 486-7776

**Safe Ag Safe Schools**  
(Monterey and Santa Cruz)  
(831) 204-6163

**Sonoma SASS**  
(Sonoma)  
(707) 634-4660
Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR) is a statewide coalition of more than 190 organizations, founded in 1996 to fundamentally shift the way pesticides are used in California. CPR's mission is to protect public health, improve environmental quality and expand a sustainable and just agriculture system by building a diverse movement across California to change statewide and local pesticide policies and practices.