



Tailgate Safety Training for Landscaping and Horticultural Services

Agricultural Safety Program, 590 Woody Hayes Drive, Columbus, OH 43210

Laundering Pesticide-Contaminated Clothing

Objective: Launder pesticide-contaminated clothing according to safety guidelines.

How to Use This Module

Clothing exposed to pesticides must be washed separately and properly. For this module:

- Read the information below on why and how to launder clothing exposed to pesticides.
- Discuss what and what not to launder with your supervisor.
- Review the important points.
- Take the True/False quiz to check your learning.

Background

Workers should always wear personal protection equipment (PPE) when working with pesticides. However, even with PPE, regular work clothing absorbs pesticides. Your skin can then absorb the pesticides. Clothing can be decontaminated by washing. Pesticide-contaminated clothing (PCC) must be washed separately and properly. This also applies to reusable PPE.

Your employer should provide you with clean PPE. You should not take contaminated PPE home for cleaning — it will contaminate your home.

Before Laundering PCC

Read the pesticide label first. It may give directions for the laundering process. All clothing worn while working with pesticides should be considered contaminated. The clothing should be separated from other clothing. Wear rubber gloves when working with PCC. PCC should be washed after each use. It is easier to remove pesticides daily than to remove accumulated contamination. PCC should not be dry cleaned. PCC should not be washed in a public laundromat.

Before laundering PCC, check with local or state agencies for proper disposal of contaminated rinse water.

After taking off clothing, use soap and water to wash your hands, face, neck, and forearms. Then take a shower.

Laundering PCC

- Pre-rinse or pre-soak clothing. Pre-soak clothing contaminated with similar pesticides together.
- PCC should be washed separately from household laundry.

- The washer should not be overloaded. Wash a few items at a time.
- Use only hot water (140 to 160 degrees).
- The water level should be on the highest setting. Run a full cycle (12 minutes) using a double rinse.
- Dry soap should be used to clean dry forms of pesticides. Liquid detergent should be used to clean liquid forms of pesticides.
- Use 25 percent more soap when clothing has been treated with a soil- or water-repellent finish (i.e., Scotchguard™ or Zepel™).
- Bleach should not be used. It does not remove pesticide residue. It can react with ammonia fertilizer to form chlorine gas. This can be fatal.
- All laundered clothing should be line dried. Sunlight will help breakdown any pesticide residue left in the clothing. Also, line drying will keep the dryer from becoming contaminated.
- Store PPE clothing in a clean, dry place. Store away from other clothing. Store away from pesticides. Store away from pesticide containers.
- Clean the washing machine by running the empty washer through a full wash cycle with hot water and soap. This is an important step. If the washer is not decontaminated, other clothing will become contaminated.

Pesticides Cannot Be Removed From:

- Leather boots
- Leather watchbands
- Inner bands on caps and some decorative items
- Severely contaminated clothing

Warning

- Do not wash limited-use coveralls if they have been contaminated with pesticides.
- Treat contaminated coveralls the same way you would treat the pesticide. Wear gloves and other PPE to protect yourself from pesticide residues within the clothing.

Reusable Coated/Laminated Suits

Suits made from materials such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or nitrile should not be decontaminated in a washer. Instead, hose them off. Then wash them in a tub of hot soapy water. Protective clothing made of nitrile, PVC, or other rubber-like compounds should be line dried. However, line dry them in the shade. Sunlight is harmful and will damage the suits. Suits made from plastic, nitrile, or latex may melt if placed in a dryer.

Review These Important Points

- Pesticide-contaminated clothing should be washed separately from other clothing.
- Use the maximum water level and the hottest water. Line dry the clothing.
- Clean the washer with a full wash cycle using hot water.
- Contaminated coveralls should be treated the same way you would treat the pesticide.

About These Modules

The author team for the training modules in the landscape and horticultural tailgate training series includes Dee Jepsen, Program Director, Agricultural Safety and Health, Ohio State University Extension; Michael Wonacott, Research Specialist, Vocational Education; Peter Ling, Greenhouse Specialist; and Thomas Bean, Agricultural Safety Specialist. Modules were developed with funding from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Grant Number 46E3-HT09.

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the U.S. Department of Labor.

Answer Key: 1 = F, 2 = T, 3 = T, 4 = F, 5 = T.

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Keith L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension

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Name _____

True or False?

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Pesticide residue can easily be removed from leather. | T | F |
| 2. Contaminated clothing should be laundered after each use. | T | F |
| 3. Rubber gloves should always be worn when laundering pesticide-contaminated clothing. | T | F |
| 4. Pesticide-contaminated clothing does not have to be kept separate from other laundry. | T | F |
| 5. Bleach should not be used in the laundering process. | T | F |