

# PESTICIDE SAFETY



Information

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

A No. 10

## Extra Medical Care For Handlers Who Use Organophosphates and Carbamates

If you mix, load, or apply organophosphate or carbamate pesticides, you might need extra medical care. Your employer must track how often you work with these pesticides. Your employer must arrange for you to get extra medical care if:

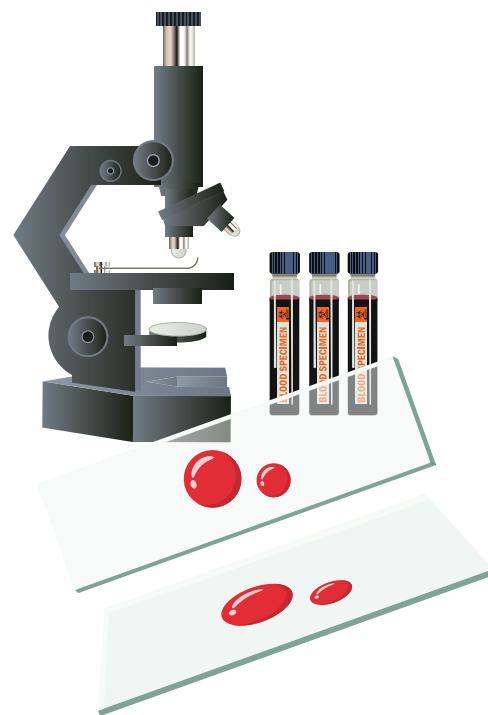
1. You use these pesticides for more than 6 days in a 30-day period, AND
2. The label of the pesticide(s) you use has the word “DANGER” or “WARNING” on it.

### WHAT IS EXTRA MEDICAL CARE?

If you require extra medical care, you must get special blood tests so the doctor can tell if the pesticides are hurting your body. This may be happening even if you don't feel sick. The blood tests measure cholinesterase, a chemical in your body that helps your nerves work properly.

Organophosphates and carbamates can keep cholinesterase from working and harm your nerves. You must have the blood tests to make sure you don't get sick while working with these pesticides.

Having blood tests to check your cholinesterase **MUST** be part of your extra medical care.



## WHEN DO I GET THE BLOOD TESTS?

You SHOULD have a blood test BEFORE you start to work with these pesticides. This blood test should be taken when you have not worked with organophosphates and carbamates for at least 30 days. This first blood test will tell you what your normal cholinesterase level is. This level is compared to later tests to make sure you are still okay. Your normal cholinesterase level must be rechecked every two years.

## WHERE DO I GO TO GET THE BLOOD TESTS?

Your employer must arrange with a doctor for you to have the blood tests and your employer must pay for the tests. Your employer must post the doctor's name, address, and phone number where you can see it, such as on the A-8 safety leaflet displayed at your job site.

## HOW OFTEN DO I NEED A BLOOD TEST?

After the doctor determines your normal cholinesterase level, you must:

1. Be tested at the end of each 30-day period for the first 3 months; then,
2. Be tested every 60 days after the first three months (or as recommended by the doctor).

If extra medical care is needed, the blood tests must be done even if you don't handle pesticides every day. After you have had your blood tested several times, the doctor may change how often you should be tested.

## HOW DO I FIND OUT WHAT MY BLOOD TEST SHOWS?

Within 14 days of receiving the test results, the doctor will notify you and your employer of the results and any recommendations. Your employer must keep the records of your blood test results and the doctor's advice for three years and let you look at these records anytime you want to.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF MY BLOOD TESTS SHOW MY CHOLINESTERASE LEVELS ARE LOW?

If your blood tests show your cholinesterase level is low, it means that there could be a problem when you work with these pesticides. Your employer must find out if you are being exposed to the pesticide.

If there are problems, your employer must:

- Fix any equipment that is not working right.
- Make sure that you are working safely with these pesticides or change how you work with them.

If your cholinesterase level gets very low, your employer must stop you from working with these pesticides before you become very sick. You cannot work with these kinds of pesticides until your blood tests show your body is getting better. You may do other work or handle other pesticides during this time.

You and your employer must follow all instructions from the doctor. Only the doctor can explain what your blood tests mean.



If you don't get all the information you need in your training or want to make a pesticide use complaint, you should call your County Agricultural Commissioner, or the DPR for more information. You can find the Commissioner's number in your local white pages phone directory, by calling 1-87PestLine, or at: <http://www.cdafa.ca.gov/exec/county/countymap/>

DPR's Regional Offices are:

- Northern (West Sacramento) 916/376-8960
- Central (Clovis) 559/297-3511
- Southern (Anaheim) 714/279-7690

