

PESTICIDE SAFETY

If not handled properly, pesticides can harm the applicator. Workers in turf and landscape industries must take steps to guard against exposure and reduce risk.

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) will help protect pesticide applicators from pesticide hazards. The **'Pesticide Safety'** chapter in the **Applicator Core Manual** gives information on choosing, wearing, and looking after PPE. It also covers transporting, storing, mixing, handling, and disposing of pesticides. Turf and landscape pesticide applicators need to know how to properly choose and wear PPE for their type of work. This is described in the following sections.

Learning Objectives

Completing this chapter will help you to:

- Understand the potential for exposure when handling pesticides in the turf care and landscape.
- Identify required personal protective equipment (PPE).

Personal Protective Equipment

There are risks involved in using pesticides. Risk to the applicator increases when pesticides are used frequently or for long periods of time. In the turf care and landscape industries, there is a risk of long-term exposure (e.g., spray drift or contact with treated vegetation). Proper personal protective equipment (PPE) reduces the risk of acute and long-term health effects. Applicators must protect against exposure by using proper PPE. For example, feet and legs need to be protected to reduce exposure when applying pesticides while walking through the treatment area.

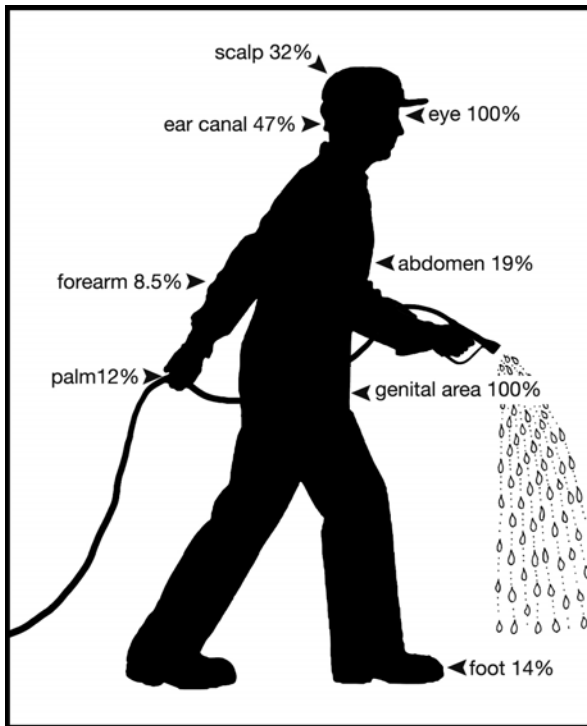


Figure 3-1: Absorption rates differ for pesticide exposure to different body parts.

Always read the label to see what PPE is needed for a given application. When working with pesticides, applicators must wear PPE, as stated by provincial law or the product label (whichever is stricter). The **Applicator Core Manual Chapter 5: Pesticide Safety** provides advice/guidelines on PPE.

When using backpack sprayers or spray wands for lawn treatments, applicators should at least wear:

- Long-legged pants
- A long-sleeved shirt
- Chemical resistant gloves
- Rubber boots

Personal protective equipment should be worn while handling, cleaning, and taking care of equipment. Check the label to see if a respirator, goggles or other additional PPE are needed when using specific pesticides.



Avoid spraying above shoulder height. This reduces applicator exposure. This will also protect others from drift. If an application above shoulder height is needed, additional PPE will be required. This may include:

- Full-face protection
- A respirator
- Long chemical resistant gloves
- Water repellent clothing
- Head cover

Figure 3-2: Applicators need more PPE to protect from overhead spraying.

Always wear PPE that is appropriate for the pesticide and method of application. If application equipment stops working properly, stop at once. Put on any additional needed PPE before cleaning equipment or making repairs.

When cleaning application equipment, (e.g., a plugged nozzle) wear:

- Chemical resistant gloves
- Rubber boots
- Coveralls
- Face protection



Applicators should know the risk of pesticide exposure when handling sods or grass clippings that have been recently treated with pesticides. Wear proper PPE including unlined gloves, coveralls, and boots. This will prevent contact with residues from recent applications.

Figure 3-3: Baseball caps can absorb pesticides and should not be worn when spraying.

Summary

If not handled properly, pesticides can harm the applicator. Workers in turf and landscape industries must take steps to guard against exposure and reduce risk.

Applicators should follow the guidelines outlined in the chapter ‘Pesticide Safety’ in the Core Manual.

Wear PPE that is appropriate for the pesticide and method of application. If application equipment stops working properly, stop at once. Put on any additional needed PPE before cleaning equipment or making repairs.

Self-Test Questions

Answers are in located in Appendix A of this manual.

1. What is the maximum safe height to apply pesticides (to minimize applicator exposure)?

2. List the PPE to be worn when cleaning plugged nozzles.

3. Ball caps should be worn to protect the head while spraying. **True or False?**

4. What PPE is **not** required (minimum) for applicators when handling, cleaning, and taking care of backpack sprayers or spray wands during lawn treatments?

- a. A respirator
- b. A long-sleeved shirt
- c. Chemical resistant gloves and rubber boots
- d. Long-legged pants

