

**Canadian
Agricultural
Safety Week
Mar. 11-17,
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FACT SHEET #7

THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

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Good PPE practices include laundering work clothes

Some people think of personal protective equipment (PPE) as only being hardhats, boots and goggles. In fact PPE can be almost anything that reduces exposure to a hazard - including changes in laundry washing habits that will reduce secondary chemical exposures for chemical applicators and their families.

“PPE only works if you use it!” is the theme of this year’s Canadian Agricultural Safety campaign with a focus on the use, fit and access of personal protective equipment in agriculture. The yearlong campaign will be launched with Canadian Agricultural Safety Week (CASW), from March 11 to 17, 2009. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) and Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) deliver CASW in partnership with Farm Credit Canada (FCC) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

“Farm safety doesn’t just happen in the barn or on a tractor,” says Marcel Hacault, CASA Executive Director. “Most agricultural producers both work and live on their farms. So care must be given to ensure that hazards from the work environment are not brought into the home environment.”

Handling and applying pesticides is a common practice in agriculture. Their use in most provinces requires farmers to regularly complete pesticide training and safety certification. Knowing how to minimize agricultural pesticide exposures is important both for farmers and pesticide applicators and also for their families.

Ideally, you should keep a separate set of work clothes just for when you handle pesticides. Protective clothing should cover all the areas of your body that easily come into contact with the pesticide. Always wash your clothing immediately after using a pesticide, following these guidelines:

Remove Soiled Clothing: Promptly remove ALL clothing worn during pesticide application for laundering. Do not wear clothing into living or food preparation areas. If you can’t wash your clothes immediately store them in a closed plastic bag, away from family and pets. Always wash them before wearing them again.

Pre-Rinse Soiled Clothing: Rinse clothes in a basin or the washing machine in a pre-rinse solution, or on a clothesline outdoors where they can be rinsed with a hose. **Always** wash your pesticide application clothing separately from **any** other laundry.

Wash Your Work Clothes: For the best results, wash your work clothes with the washing machine set on the highest water level, hottest water temperatures, longest agitation time, and use the fullest recommended amount of detergent.

Clean the Washing Machine: After you have removed the clean, wet laundry, add more detergent and run the washing machine through the complete wash and rinse cycles again with no clothes in it. This will clean the washer and prevent contamination of future loads of laundry.

Hang Work Clothes to Dry: Hang your pesticide work clothes outside to dry, as exposure to sunlight will help break down any lingering chemicals that may remain in the clothes. If the clothes cannot be dried outside, then place on a clotheshorse inside to dry. **Never** place clothing that has been used to apply or work with pesticides in the dryer as this increases the risk of contaminating other articles of clothing.

Storing Laundered Clothes: Store your cleaned pesticide clothing separately from other clothes.

The CFA along with FCC, CASA and AAFC want to remind Canadian farmers that “*PPE only works if you use it!*”

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*** Free photos and cartoons are available to accompany this article at www.casa-acsa.ca .

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