



What Is the Children's Pesticide Right-to-Know Act?

The Children's Pesticide Right to Know Act establishes your right to know about pesticides used in Washington's public schools and in day care facilities.

Why was the Children's Pesticide Right-to-Know Act necessary?

- **School pesticide use is widespread:** Districts throughout Washington state routinely use pesticides linked to cancer, nervous system damage, reproductive harm, and hormone disruption called high-hazard pesticides. In a 1998 survey by the Washington Toxics Coalition, 88% of 33 school districts surveyed reported using at least one high-hazard pesticide. School districts surveyed represented a range of rural, urban, small and large districts, so the hazards of school pesticide use appear to be widespread.
- **No restrictions on school pesticide use:** Use of pesticides that can cause serious health effects faces no special restrictions in Washington schools—unless an individual school district takes action to protect its students and staff.
- **No system of notification or reporting about school pesticide use:** School districts were not required to automatically notify all parents or compile yearly reports of pesticide use. A request for information about pesticide use might yield no response or a huge stack of application records.

The Children's Pesticide Right-to-Know Act becomes law

After activists waged a five-year campaign to highlight the widespread threat to our children's health, Governor Gary Locke signed the Children's Pesticide Right-to-Know Act into law in May of 2001.

The law requires school districts to:

- Notify parents annually about their pest management policies and methods, including posting and notification requirements;
- Maintain records of all pesticide applications to school facilities and make records readily accessible to all interested persons;

- Provide an annual summary of all pesticide use in the district during the previous year;
- Notify at least interested parents or all parents 48 hours in advance of all pesticide applications, for example via a registry; notification must also be posted 48 hours in advance in a prominent place in the main office of the school.
- For outdoor pesticide applications, post notices at all primary points of entry to the school grounds, and at sites of application; notices must be left in place for 24 hours afterwards and be in colors contrasting to the background;
- For indoor applications to school facilities, post notices at the location of the application; notices must be left in place for 24 hours afterwards and be in colors contrasting to the background.

Frequently asked questions about the Children's Pesticide Right-to-Know Act

- **Who is responsible for implementation of the Children's Pesticide Right-to-Know Act?**
All public school districts must provide notification, posting, and record-keeping (see above). Washington's state Department of Agriculture must ensure that districts comply with the law, and provide information to help them to so.
- **When will the Act take effect?** The Children's Pesticide Right-to-Know Act is effective July 1, 2002. The Washington State Department of Agriculture will oversee implementation of the Act.
- **How do parents learn about pesticide health effects?** Parents and school staff who would like to learn more about how to exercise their right to know about school pesticide use, or who would like to learn how to work for pesticide reduction in their school district can use the materials in this Pesticide Action Kit, or contact the Washington Toxics Coalition at (206) 632-1545 or info@watoxics.org.

For more information on school pest control that protects children's health, contact the Washington Toxics Coalition at (206) 632-1545 or info@watoxics.org