

# Farm workers face risk of pesticide poisoning

Farm workers face several hazards on the job but a new report found that many farm workers in the U.S. are exposed to serious health risks every year. Farm workers are exposed to pesticides every day while working and employers are not taking the appropriate precautions to protect their workers from pesticide poisoning and other workplace illnesses, according to a report by the Farmworker Justice organization.

The report said that thousands of workers suffer pesticide-related illnesses every year, mainly because employers and workplace standards are not in place to prevent exposure as safety standards regarding pesticide exposure have not been updated in over 20 years.

Pesticide exposure is very dangerous for farm workers in Pennsylvania and throughout the country, and farm workers have one of the highest rates of chemical-related injuries and illnesses in all occupations in the U.S.

Pesticide exposure can cause very serious short-term health issues including blindness, dizziness, headache, rashes, nausea, coma and death, according to the report. Long-term complications include cancer, neurological complications and infertility.

The report said that many pesticide exposure cases can be prevented by using updated safety standards that include more training and education among farm workers as well as finding ways to reduce contact with pesticides while on the job.

The organization said that employers should create a buffer zone in residential areas to keep families and other people around the area less exposed to the dangerous chemicals. They also recommended that a national system be created to report

pesticide use and poisonings to keep track of how often they occur and what can be done to prevent exposure in the future.

Farm workers should be protected when they work, and that includes taking the appropriate precautions to reduce pesticide exposure that can cause serious and fatal complications in farm workers who are exposed to these dangerous chemicals.

While it may take some time to establish better safety standards for pesticide use and exposure, farm workers should know that they have rights in the workplace. Farm workers who have suffered complications due to pesticide exposure should contact a workers' compensation attorney to discuss their legal options.

**Source:** EHS Today, "[Farmworker Justice Report Profiles Dangers of Pesticide Poisoning](#)," Sandy Smith, July 16, 2013