

Tips for Laundering Pesticide-Contaminated Clothing

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- After using pesticides, remove all clothing and place in a plastic bag. Tie closing until time to launder clothes. When clothing is removed from bag, dispose of bag as you would empty pesticide containers.
- Wear waterproof gloves when handling pesticide-contaminated clothing.
- Launder clothing daily when applying pesticides daily. Pesticide residue will be easier to remove and this will prevent its build-up on clothing.

PRERINSE

- Use one of three methods:
 - 1.** Rinse in separate tub or pail. Dispose of water through sewer system.
 - 2.** Hose off garments outdoors. Avoid areas where children and pets play.
 - 3.** Prewash in automatic washer with detergent.
- Prerinse garments at least twice. Prerinse is effective particularly in dislodging the pesticide particles from clothing when a wettable powder pesticide has been used.

WASHER LOAD

- Wash garments separately from family wash.
- Wash garments which have been contaminated with the same pesticide, together.

LOAD SIZE

- Wash only a few garments at a time. **WATER LEVEL**

WATER LEVEL

Use full water level. It allows the water to flush the pesticide more thoroughly from the fabric, therefore less residue is redeposited on the clothing.

WATER TEMPERATURE

- Use hot water wash, 140 degrees F or higher.
- Use warm water rinse.
- Avoid washing clothes in cold water. It does not remove pesticides effectively.

WASH CYCLE

- Use normal 12-minute wash cycle.

DETERGENT

- Use a heavy-duty detergent.
- Use amount recommended on package.
- Select detergents according to the type of pesticide that contaminated the clothing. Heavy-duty liquid detergents are more effective than other detergents in removing emulsifiable concentrate (E.C.) pesticides. Emulsifiable concentrate pesticides are oil-based, and heavy-duty liquid detergents are known for their oil-removing ability. Granular detergents are effective in removing water soluble (wetable powder) pesticides.

ADDITIVES

- Neither bleach nor ammonia remove pesticides. They can be used as a laundry aid or disinfectant but never together.

MULTIPLE WASHINGS

- Wash heavily contaminated clothes at least twice.

DRYING

- To avoid contaminating dryer, line-dry garments outdoors if possible. The sunlight also may cause many pesticides to break down.

RINSE WASHER

- Rinse empty washer by running it through a full cycle with hot water and detergent. Also clean the prerinsing equipment. These precautions prevent family laundry from being contaminated by pesticide residue.

WASHING OTHER ITEMS

- After each use, thoroughly clean inside and out all washable boots, gloves, aprons, hats and goggles. Use hot water and detergent.

OTHER TIPS

Since many pesticides vary in chemical and physical composition, the research-based recommendations in this leaflet are generalized. For information on a specific pesticide contact your local county Extension office.

- The application of starch has been found to act as a pesticide trap on the surface of some fabrics. Research studies indicate starch may also improve pesticide removal when laundered.
- Be aware of when and what types of pesticides are being used.
- Always wear waterproof gloves to avoid pesticide exposure to the skin when handling pesticide-contaminated clothing.
- Burn or bury garments that have been saturated with pesticide concentrate or highly toxic pesticides. Remove clothing carefully and immediately place in a plastic bag. Close bag tightly. After laundering clothing, dispose of empty bag along with empty pesticide containers.
- Remove contaminated clothing from the body outdoors or in an entry. If a granular pesticide has been used, shake clothing outdoors. Empty pockets and cuffs.
- Keep contaminated clothing separate from the family wash. Research has shown that pesticide residue can be transferred from contaminated garments to other clothing when they are washed and stored together.
- Save clothing worn while handling pesticides for that use only. Keep separate from all other clothing before, during and after laundering.
- Remove contaminated clothing, including underwear, as soon as possible. Shower and wash hair before changing into clean clothes.

For information on selecting appropriate clothing when using pesticides, contact your local county Extension office.

Linda Heaton, Extension Specialist in Textiles and Water Quality

University of Kentucky • College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service

agriculture • home economics • 4-H • development

Educational programs of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, C. Oran Little, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Lexington, and Kentucky State University, Frankfort.

Issued 8-85; Revised/Last Printed 3-95, 2000 copies; 22000 copies to date.