

Frequently asked questions

Q: Can I wear my regular eyeglasses or contact lenses for eye protection?

A: No, they do not protect your eyes from pesticide splashes or vapors. In fact, contact lenses may absorb pesticides.

Q: Can I wear shorts and a T-shirt when applying weed & feed to my lawn on a warm day?

A: No. They will not protect your arms and legs from exposure to dust from the product.

Q: Are cotton or leather gloves adequate to protect my hands while handling pesticides?

A: No. Cotton or leather gloves absorb pesticide and hold it close to the skin, as will cloth linings in rubber gloves. However, rubber dishwashing gloves provide adequate protection when using most home pesticides; once you wear gloves for handling pesticides, do not use them for any other purpose. Disposable surgical gloves are too thin and are not chemical resistant.

Q: What do I do if I spill a pesticide on my clothing?

A: Stop what you are doing immediately. Remove contaminated clothing and wash yourself with soap and clean water. Discard clothing on which you spill undiluted pesticide.

Home PEST seeks to provide homeowners with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about pesticides.

This publication is available from your county Cooperative Extension office.

The Home PEST project was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Pesticide Applicator Training (PAT) program.

Any reference to pesticide products are for your convenience and are not an endorsement or criticism of one product over other similar products.

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#10 - Personal Protective Equipment

What to wear when handling pesticides



Home PEST

Home Pesticide Education & Safety Training
University of Wisconsin-Extension

What is “Personal Protective Equipment?”

Personal protective equipment (PPE) includes gear and clothes you wear to protect your body from contact with pesticides. Chemical-resistant PPE does not allow measurable movement of pesticide through the item during use. Garden gloves are not chemical resistant, but rubber gloves are resistant to many pesticides.

Why wear PPE?

Pesticides can enter your body by being absorbed by your:

- Skin
- Eyes
- Lungs

PPE reduces such absorption by providing a barrier between your body and the pesticide.

When to wear PPE

Wear proper PPE whenever you handle pesticides or when touching freshly treated surfaces.

Handling activities include: handling containers, mixing and applying pesticides, cleaning application equipment, and disposing of pesticide waste.

Put on all PPE **BEFORE** opening the pesticide container.

What to Wear When Handling Pesticides

Read the pesticide label for specific clothing and equipment requirements.

Either safety glasses with side and brow shields or goggles, especially when spraying overhead or mixing.

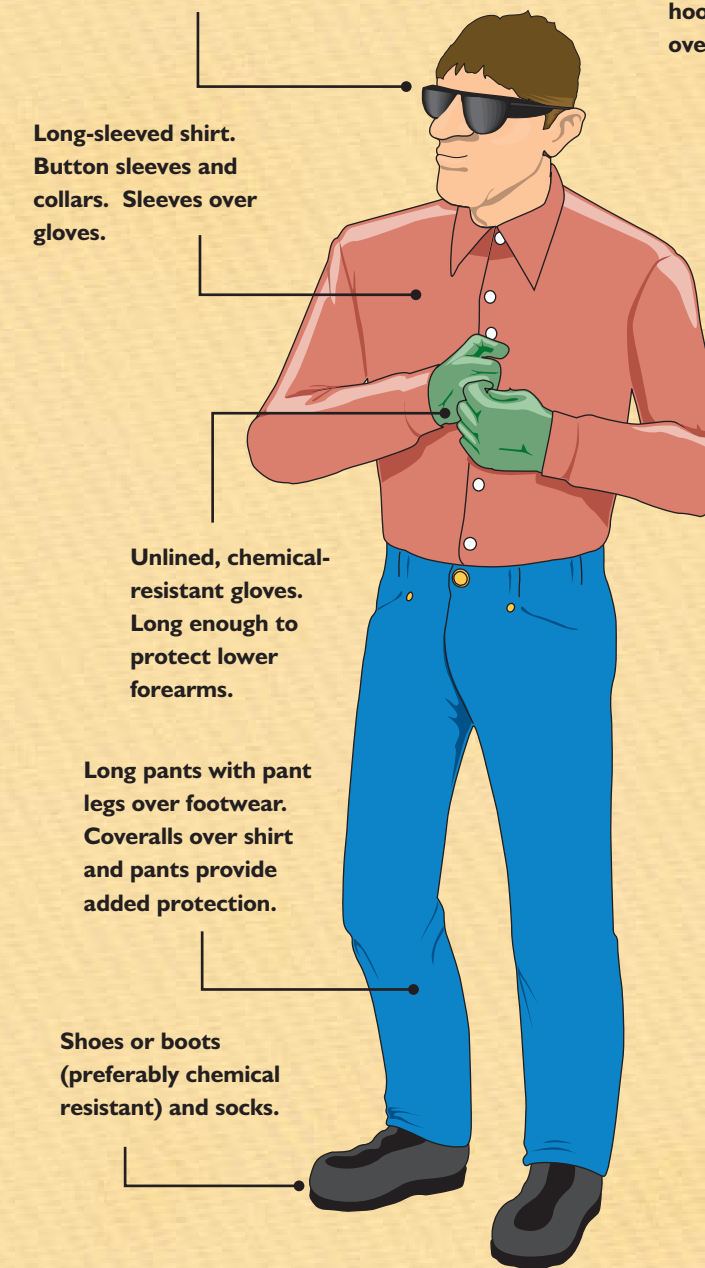
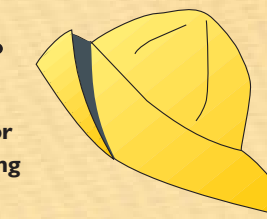
Long-sleeved shirt. Button sleeves and collars. Sleeves over gloves.

Unlined, chemical-resistant gloves. Long enough to protect lower forearms.

Long pants with pant legs over footwear. Coveralls over shirt and pants provide added protection.

Shoes or boots (preferably chemical resistant) and socks.

Wide-brimmed rain hat or hooded raincoat if spraying overhead.



Care of PPE

- Wash the outside of gloves & boots with soap and water **BEFORE** removing them.
- Hand wash protective eyewear with soap and water and dry thoroughly.
- Check gloves regularly for holes by filling them with water and squeezing.
- Place reusable PPE in a labeled plastic bag. Do not use for any other purpose.

Laundering PPE

- Wear rubber gloves when handling pesticide-contaminated clothing.
- Discard any clothing contaminated with concentrated (undiluted) pesticide; research shows that such clothes remain contaminated even after repeated washings.
- Launder PPE separate from the family laundry.
- Pre-soak clothing before washing and wash in hot water with a heavy-duty detergent.
- Line dry, if possible.