

# WORKER HERBICIDE EXPOSURE

## 1 Introduction

Use this story to have a conversation with your workers about:

- How an injury can affect them and their family.
- Why it's important to know about the chemicals you work with.
- What protections are needed when working with chemicals.
- The procedures to follow if they get hurt.

*"Today we are going to talk about why it's important to know about any chemicals you work with, and to know what the requirements are for being protected from them. We will start with the experience of one forest worker and how his illness could have been prevented. This story was shared by a forest worker in the Northwest U.S."*

## 2 Share Story See back

## 3 Conversation questions Ask 2 or 3

- ***"What problems do you see in this story?"***
  - No training about the chemicals and protective gear.
  - Spray drift onto co-workers.
  - The crew was pressured to work too fast.
- ***"How could this injury have been prevented?"***
- ***"Have you experienced anything like this? How can this type of injury affect you personally?"***
- ***"Does anyone know what our procedures are if someone is injured on the job?"***



## How could this injury have been prevented?

**Be prepared. You must be trained if you use any kind of chemical.**

- How the chemical gets into your body. (skin/eyes, breathing, mouth?)
- How the chemical can affect your health. (Rash? Dizziness? Nose bleed? Difficulty breathing? Nausea?) Some kinds of chemicals, including some herbicides, can lead to cancer or other long-term health problems.
- What protection is required for the chemical being used. (Gloves? Eye goggles? Respirator or mask?) Employers are required to provide the protective gear listed on the label.

**Read the label. The label is the law. Every chemical container must have a label that describes how to safely handle the product.**

**Handle pesticides safely.**

- Before using, check equipment for leaks. Clean and check again after use.
- Eye splashes cause serious injuries and is a route of exposure. Wear eye protection when handling chemicals.
- Wash your hands, forearms and face before you eat, drink, smoke or rub your eyes.
- If you have cuts or skinned places, check with your supervisor. You may need gloves or waterproof bandage.
- Make sure you and your co-workers are spaced out and not downwind of the spray.

## 2

## Share Story

## Read aloud or share photo story

*"I was spraying with a pump and didn't have protection. The chemical started coming in through my eyes and throat. I started getting a headache right away. I asked the supervisor what I should do, and he said he would ask the boss.*

*I was short of breath and started getting dizzy. We were working fast because they were pressuring us to get finished so we could drive home. I felt a lot of pressure because the faster people were behind me. Like, to push me more. We were working about 1.5 meters apart. I told my supervisor that I felt really sick about 20 minutes later. I wasn't looking too good and he told me to stop working.*

*After that I was too sick to work. I missed 3 days of work. I didn't get any medical treatment. My family was worried because I'm alone here. I'm the one who supports my family. They should give us training and safety equipment if we are using chemicals. They didn't do anything for me and never came back to me to work for them after that."*



I was spraying chemicals with a pump and didn't have protection for my eyes, mouth and nose.



What should I do to protect myself?

I will ask the boss later.

I started getting a headache right away.



I feel dizzy and sick.

Go take a break. We need to finish so we can drive home.

I felt a lot of pressure because the faster people were behind me, to push me more.



After that I was too sick to work. I missed 3 days of work. I didn't get any medical treatment.



My family was worried because I'm alone here. I'm the one who supports my family.



You need to know the chemical you are working with. The container label is the law and provides instructions on use and safety equipment.

They should give us training if we are using chemicals.

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# FOREST WORKER SAFETY TALKS

## PLÁTICAS SOBRE SEGURIDAD PARA LOS TRABAJADORES FORESTALES



Available in Spanish / Disponible in English  
[http://deohs.washington.edu/pnash/forest\\_safety](http://deohs.washington.edu/pnash/forest_safety)

