Department of Pesticide Regulation

Gavin Newsom
Governor

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Environmental Protection

April 29, 2020

TO: Interested Persons

SUBJECT: COMPLIANCE WITH PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR PESTICIDES DURING THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

During the COVID-19 emergency, the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has received numerous inquiries regarding personal protective equipment (PPE). The COVID-19 emergency response has increased demand from the health care sector and the general public resulting in a shortage of PPE (e.g., respirators, gloves, eyewear, protective clothing) in the normal supply chain for pesticide applicators and handlers who are required to wear PPE for protection from pesticide exposure.

DPR and county agricultural commissioners (CACs) continue to enforce PPE requirements on pesticide product labels and PPE-related regulations under Title 3, California Code of Regulations, sections 6738–6739 to protect worker health and safety. DPR is aware that there have been changes to PPE requirements for health care workers (e.g., extended use of respirators, relaxation of fit-testing requirements, use allowance of non-NIOSH approved respirators). At this time, PPE requirements for pesticide applicators and handlers in California have not changed.

DPR is actively working with its regulatory partners to address concerns about PPE shortages in California. DPR has been engaged in conversations with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on PPE guidance, which we anticipate shortly. DPR, county agricultural commissioners, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) have surveyed and are tracking PPE needs of industries during the COVID-19 emergency. DPR has also identified local agency pathways for PPE supply requests that have been activated by the California Office of Emergency Services and relayed this critical information to local agency partners. Additionally, DPR has created lists of PPE alternatives (i.e., respirators and gloves) that meet or exceed current standards for worker protection (N95 Respirator Alternatives [enclosed] and Glove Alternatives [enclosed]) as a resource to industries.

DPR is committed to pesticide worker protection while being mindful of the need for PPE used to support essential businesses and services. We will continue to keep our stakeholders informed of any development that affect PPE requirements or availability.

If you have questions or concerns relating to PPE, please contact me at the number below or <Nan.Singhasemanon@cdpr.ca.gov>.

Sincerely,

Nan Singhasemanon
Assistant Director
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