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## 9. Pesticide Incidents and Accidents

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- Objectives:
- To increase understanding of health risks of, and the possible routes of exposure to pesticides.
  - To develop understanding of state and federal pesticide regulations, pesticide illness recordkeeping, and the need for stronger enforcement of pesticide laws.

Activities:

- Find out** which agency(ies) in your state keep track of pesticide-related human exposure incidents. Ask for the most recent summary of such incident reports, if available. If not, ask if the agency can provide you with a custom report or letter describing a particular subset of exposure incidents (e.g., those that occurred in schools, or in your city or county, or that involve agricultural pesticide drift, children, a particular pesticide chemical, farmworkers, birdkills, or more. To learn more about pesticide incidents in schools, read NCAP's *Unthinkable Risk* report ([www.pesticide.org/UnthinkableRisk.html](http://www.pesticide.org/UnthinkableRisk.html)).
- Examine** the summaries of reported incidents that you receive, and **pick one** to investigate further for a more detailed report. Make a written request to the agency for more information or for the entire case file. Be sure to inquire about possible charges first, as some state agencies charge for copying costs, and some case files may be large. What pesticide(s) were involved? Who was exposed? What symptoms were reported? Was the incident the result of legal or illegal pesticide application? A spill or accident? How could it have been prevented? Was proper protective clothing or safety equipment available? Used? Was anyone harmed? Was wildlife affected? Was property damaged? Was enforcement action taken by the state agency?
- If possible (and appropriate,) **consider visiting** the site of the incident and interviewing individuals who were involved to get their first-hand accounts. Often it will not be possible to identify such individuals.
- As a class or group, **consider** making individual or group posters depicting incidents for display in your school. If the incidents involve schools, or a site near your school or in your neighborhood, see if your school or local newspaper would print an article that you write about the incident.

Where to Start Your Research:

- In Oregon: Pesticide Analytical and Response Center (PARC), Suite 730, 800 NE Oregon Street #21, Portland, OR 97232, (503) 731-4025. [Publishes an annual report summarizing pesticide incidents reported to Oregon state agencies.]
- In Washington: Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking Review Panel (PIRT), Department of Health, Office of Toxic Substances, PO Box 47825, Olympia, WA 98504-7825. [Publishes an annual report summarizing pesticide incidents reported to Washington state agencies.]
- In California: California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Pesticide Regulation, Worker Health and Safety Branch, 1020 N Street, Room 200, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 445-4192. [Can generate computer printouts of incident reports by type of pesticide, site of application, and more.]
- Other state and federal agencies that track pesticide incident and accident information include state Departments of Agriculture, state Health Departments, Bureau(s) of Labor and Industries, state and federal Occupational Safety and Health Administrations (OSHAs), Poison Control Centers, and state Fish and Wildlife agencies.