

**PROTOCOLS FOR RESPONSES  
TO  
PESTICIDE DRIFT INCIDENTS  
IN  
SANTA LUISA COUNTY  
AND  
CITY OF BROWNELL**

FIRST EDITION

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This bill (SB 391, Florez, Ch.913, Statutes 2004), among other things involving pesticide drift incidents, establishes minimum standard protocols for the purposes of amending area plans and requires the Certified Unified Program agency (CUPA) to amend the area plan for emergency response accordingly. The six pesticide drift protocols are:

1. Protocols for requesting and providing immediate access to pesticide-specific information necessary to assist emergency medical services personnel in identifying pesticide that may be causing a pesticide drift exposure incident and appropriate treatments.
2. Protocols to delineate specific agency responsibilities and the process for responding to calls, notifying residents, and coordinating evacuation, if needed.
3. Protocols to establish emergency shelter procedures and locations to be used in the event evacuation is needed.
4. Protocols to access services in all languages known to be spoken in the affected area in accordance with Section 11135 of the Government Code<sup>1</sup>
5. Protocols to ensure access to health care within 24 hours of the exposure and up to a week after the exposure.
6. Protocols to notify medical providers regarding eligibility for reimbursement pursuant to Section 12997.5. [of the Food and Agricultural Code].<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 11135. (a) No person in the State of California shall, on the basis of race, national origin, ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, color, or disability, be unlawfully denied full and equal access to the benefits of, or be unlawfully subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity that is conducted, operated, or administered by the state or by any state agency, is funded directly by the state, or receives any financial assistance from the state. \* \* \*

<sup>2</sup> 12997.5. (a) In addition to any penalties paid in connection with an enforcement action taken pursuant to Sections 12996, 12997, 12999, and 12999.5, any person who is found in violation of any provision of this division related to pesticides or any regulation related to pesticides adopted pursuant to this division that results in illness or injury requiring emergency medical transport or immediate medical treatment of any individual in a non-occupational setting from any pesticide used in the production of an agricultural commodity, shall be liable to the individual harmed or to the medical provider for the immediate costs of uncompensated medical care from acute injuries and illnesses of the exposed individual. \* \* \*

This bill came about in response to a pesticide drift which affected a residential community. The exposure resulted in illness and hospitalization. This has become a recurring problem and a great expense to both the local and state governments. This bill requires CUPAs to develop the local area protocols which will help the first responder's better respond to and identify the chemical of concern when a pesticide drift exposure is discovered.

## **II. PESTICIDE DRIFT PROTOCOL SUMMARY**

### **1. Protocols for requesting and providing immediate access to pesticide-specific information necessary to assist emergency medical services personnel in identifying pesticide that may be causing a pesticide drift exposure incident and appropriate treatments.**

- 1.A. Ag Commissioner to Identify the Common Pesticides in Use in Santa Luisa County
- 1.B. Ag Commissioner needs to be Dispatched Early-On to Pesticide Incidents
- 1.C. Ag Commissioner to develop Santa Luisa Pilot Project with focus on Fumigants
- 1.D. Ag Commissioner to provide annual training to the Haz-Mat Teams

### **2. Protocols to delineate specific agency responsibilities and the process for responding to calls, notifying residents, and coordinating evacuation, if needed.**

- 2.A. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to declare Med-Alert early in incident
- 2.B. Specific Pesticide Drift sections to be added to existing Area Plans

### **3. Protocols to establish emergency shelter procedures and locations to be used in the event evacuation is needed.**

- 3.A. Short-Term Shelter Considerations to be addressed by First Responders
- 3.B. Long-Term and Large Scale Considerations Addressed through County OES

### **4. Protocols to access services in all languages known to be spoken in the affected area in accordance with Section 11135 of the Government Code.**

- 4.A. ECC has access to Omni Multilingual Communications Service
- 4.B. Communication Considerations in the Field with Exposure Victims

### **5. Protocols to ensure access to health care within 24 hours of the exposure and up to a week after the exposure.**

- 5.A. ECC & EMS notifies Local Health Officer (LHO) through Med-Alert
- 5.B. Reverse 9-1-1 System (Teleminder) can be used to contact area residents
- 5.C. HelpLine and the 2-1-1 Information System Availability

### **6. Protocols to notify medical providers regarding eligibility for reimbursement pursuant to Section 12997.5. [of the Food and Agricultural Code].**

- 6.A. EMS to distribute protocols and eligibility info to local health providers
- 6.B. MMRS (Metropolitan Medical Response System) Committee Availability

### **III. PESTICIDE DRIFT PROTOCOL DISCUSSION**

#### **1. Protocols for requesting and providing immediate access to pesticide-specific information necessary to assist emergency medical services personnel in identifying pesticide that may be causing a pesticide drift exposure incident and appropriate treatments.**

##### **1.A. Ag Commissioner to Identify the Common Pesticides in Use in Santa Luisa County**

Ag Commissioner will develop a list of the top 50 most common agricultural chemicals. This list will be provided to the Brownell and Santa Luisa County Fire Department Haz-Mat Teams. These chemicals will be cross-referenced by trade name and/or synonym as also found in the Crop Protection Handbook, which is carried on the Hazardous Materials Response vehicles in their reference library. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) will also be made available for the reference library for the substances on this list. This will help provide immediate access to pesticide-specific information, including proper decontamination procedures, based on chemical name, common name, and/or trade name being known.

##### **1.B. Ag Commissioner needs to be Dispatched Early-On to Pesticide Incidents**

If the pesticide drift incident occurs during normal working hours, Ag Commissioner staffs are often readily available in the general area and can respond rather quickly once notified of the incident. However, the Ag Commissioner does not have designated on-call staff available to regularly respond to after-hours pesticide drift incidents. Therefore, it's imperative that as soon as it can reasonably be determined that either pesticides or an agricultural substance may be involved, ECC (Emergency Communications Center) should be notified to have a representative of the Ag Commissioner's office respond. A significant delay in Ag Commissioner response is inevitable since they first have to travel from their respective residence to the Ag Commissioner's office to obtain a County vehicle and then respond to the incident location. It is anticipated that the Ag Commissioner's response may be delayed by up to two hours due to the current after-hours policy. Should this become problematic on future incidents, this County policy should be re-evaluated by the Board of Supervisors on the basis of this new State law.

##### **1.C. Ag Commissioner to develop Santa Luisa Pilot Project with focus on Fumigants**

A pilot project is currently underway to provide Notice of Intent (to apply Restricted Materials) information on the Ag Commissioner's web site for at least the Evilash & Hotep areas. The initial focus of the pilot project will be on four of the most commonly used fumigants (Metam Sodium, Methyl Bromide, Telon, and Chloropicrin), since fumigants are more likely to be the source of pesticide drift incidents. The pilot project is expected to be on-line by 2008.

##### **1.D. Ag Commissioner to provide annual training to the Haz-Mat Teams**

This is currently being implemented and will continue with additional instruction on the pesticide drift incident protocols in particular.

**2. Protocols to delineate specific agency responsibilities and the process for responding to calls, notifying residents, and coordinating evacuation, if needed.**

**2.A Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to declare Med-Alert early in incident**

ECC will immediately notify EMS of any incident involving mass casualties. EMS will issue a Med-Alert to all area hospitals and clinics in the event pesticide exposure patients self-transport to those medical facilities.

**2.B Specific Pesticide Drift sections to be added to existing Area Plans**

Local agency roles and responsibilities are already listed in the existing Area Plans for both the City of Brownell and Santa Luisa County. Pesticide drift incident protocols will be specifically addressed as they pertain under each of the several existing agency responsibilities.

**3. Protocols to establish emergency shelter procedures and locations to be used in the event evacuation is needed.**

**3.A. Short-Term Shelter Considerations to be addressed by First Responders**

Shade and seating should be initially established in the Safe Refuge Area for the pesticide exposure victims while they await either patient assessment or decontamination. This is particularly important during the summer months when pesticide drift incidents are more likely to occur, when more farm laborers are likely to be exposed, and when temperatures are more likely to cause heat-related complications in addition to the chemical exposure. “Pop-up” shade canopies are carried on both the haz-mat response vehicles and the decontamination trailers. The Santa Luisa County Fire Department Decontamination Trailer is strategically located at the Numrich Fire Station and the Brownell Fire Department Decontamination Trailer is located at the East Brownell Fire Station #2. In addition, folding chairs are also available on the Decontamination Trailers. Sanitation facilities are often available in the area where farm workers are at and should be relocated to the safe refuge area by contacting either the local grower or farm labor contractor. Often, these portable sanitation facilities have hand wash stations that can be used for immediate emergency decontamination purposes early in the incident, even before the arrival of first responders.

**3.B. Long-Term and Large Scale Considerations Addressed through County OES**

Where the size and nature of the incident exceeds the capacity of shade and seating carried on the Decontamination Trailers, Santa Luisa County Office of Emergency

Services should be contacted for inter-agency assistance. Additional decontamination modules are available at the various hospitals in Santa Luisa County through EMS authority. Agreements are in place to use High Schools in Santa Luisa County for emergency shelters. Santa Luisa County Human Services Department is responsible for opening the shelters and then turning them over to the American Red Cross for operation. Considerations for additional resources need to be evaluated during initial size-up. These protocols are intended to prompt those considerations early on in the incident, as there may be a significant lag time between when the incident occurs and the actual number of exposures being known. Some exposure victims may go home or attempt to self-transport to area hospitals.

**4. Protocols to access services in all languages known to be spoken in the affected area in accordance with Section 11135 of the Government Code.**

**4.A. ECC has access to Omni Multilingual Communications Service**

The 9-1-1 dispatch centers throughout California already have existing access to the translation service provided by AT&T.

**4.B. Communication Considerations in the Field with Exposure Victims**

While ECC has translators available on their end, the first responder has to consider how to bridge that communication with the exposure victims in the field. One consideration is to provide a cellular phone to a field worker foreman for the translation service while the incident commander is in radio contact with ECC to provide instructions. The best case is to have certain personnel on-scene who can communicate in the exposure victim's language, if at all possible, through a representative of fire, health, law enforcement, or any other response agency on scene.

**5. Protocols to ensure access to health care within 24 hours of the exposure and up to a week after the exposure.**

**5.A. ECC & EMS notifies Local Health Officer (LHO) through Med-Alert**

Hazardous materials incidents automatically trigger the Med-Alert system that puts local area hospitals on notice that patients may be coming in by medical transport or self-transport. ECC will insure that the LHO is on the list of Computer Aided Dispatch notifications to call during hazardous materials incident Med-Alerts.

**5.B. Reverse 9-1-1 System (Teleminder) can be used to contact area residents**

The automated Reverse 9-1-1 callback system installed at ECC can be used to notify area residents of their ability to access health care in case of neighborhood exposure to pesticide drift. The Teleminder program allows ECC to outline a geographical area on the system's mapping software and the Reverse 9-1-1 system will automatically dial the

phone numbers within that area and play a pre-recorded message. The message allows a selection for either English or Spanish to be played upon answering. The message can be customized to instruct residents on how to seek health care and can be modified and repeated as often as necessary.

**5.C. HelpLine and the 2-1-1 Information System Availability**

The Community Action Partnership of Santa Luisa operates the HelpLine system (800-273-2275) to provide information and referral services to callers and link them to appropriate service providers. HelpLine was developed to reduce duplication of services in response to the needs of community health and social service providers, local government agencies, and community based organizations. In the very near future residents will need only to pick up a phone and dial 2-1-1 to access HelpLine, which will then be 24 hours a day and seven days per week, giving Santa Luisa County’s residents to around the clock, quick access to numerous serving programs and agencies. This process will be an invaluable resource should disaster information ever be a necessity.

**6. Protocols to notify medical providers regarding eligibility for reimbursement pursuant to Section 12997.5. [of the Food and Agricultural Code].**

**6.A. EMS to distribute protocols and eligibility info to local health providers**

Santa Luisa County EMS has an existing contact list for hospitals, clinics, private doctors, etc. and will take the lead role in providing information on eligibility for medical cost reimbursement. The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has developed a brochure on the eligibility for medical cost reimbursement pursuant to SB 391.

**6.B. MMRS (Metropolitan Medical Response System) Committee Availability**

The City of Brownell MMRS Committee can also assist to disseminate the pesticide drift protocols and the DPR brochure regarding eligibility for medical cost reimbursements to their network of member agencies and medical providers.