

# Hands-on Worker Protection Standard Training

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## Program Activities

The Hands-On Worker Protection Standard course is offered on a biennial basis in Skagit County in cooperation with WSU Skagit County Extension and Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Classes are comprised of both English and Spanish with translation of both languages to begin the course and members separating into their preferred language group after the morning session. A pre-test is given to each student to determine their knowledge of the five worker protection standard areas.

## Example Questions/Responses

In which of the following establishment does WPS apply?	Responses / Requestas	
	Percent	Count
Gardening / En jardineria	18%	4
In nurseries and greenhouses / En viveros e invernaderos (c)	73%	16
In packing houses / En empaques	0%	0
I'm not sure / No estoy seguro	9%	2
<b>Totals / Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22</b>

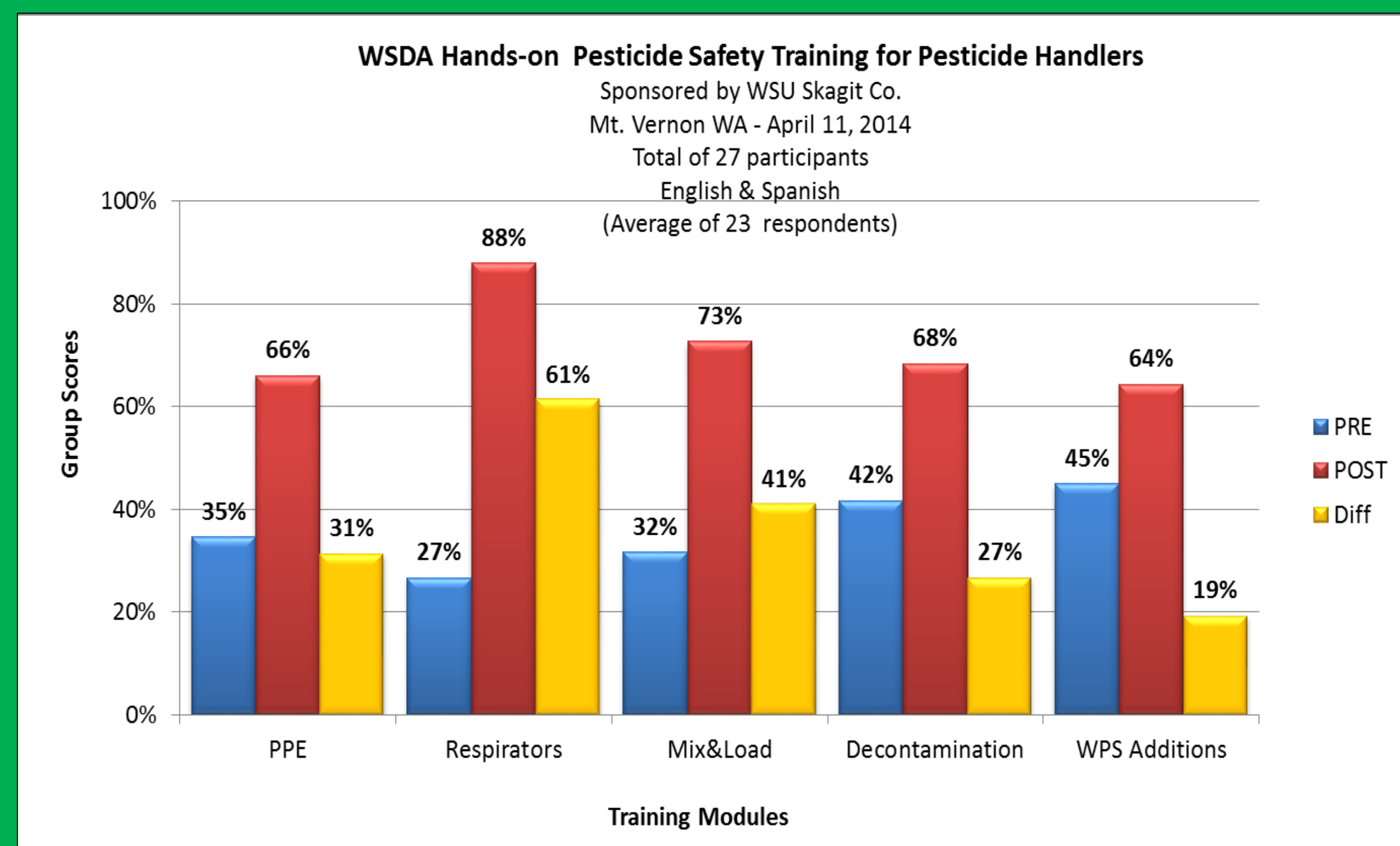
How often should you change the respirator cartridges?	Responses / Requestas	
	Percent	Count
When prompted by tag / Cuando lo indique la etiqueta	30%	6
Every 24 hours / Cada 24 horas	30%	6
When directed by the manufacturer or at the end of the day / Cuando lo indique le fabricante o al final de la jornada (c)	25%	5
I'm not sure / No estoy seguro	15%	3
<b>Totals / Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22</b>

## Abstract

Skagit County is home to over 15,000 Hispanic residents. This population includes the majority of agricultural workers in the Skagit County. Very few of the agricultural workers in Skagit County have an understanding of the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) created by the United State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designed to protect employees on farms, forests, nurseries and greenhouses from occupational exposures to agricultural pesticides, and therefore have the potential to cause harm to themselves or other workers. Workshops were needed to educate the farm worker populations in Skagit County about the WPS to keep workers from safe from unnecessary pesticide exposure. Since implementing this educational curriculum, Skagit County has not had any agricultural worker protection standard violations. Through this training employees in Skagit County have become educated enough to know the standards that employers and employees must follow regarding pesticide use. This information has helped Skagit County become a model for agricultural safety and environmental compliance in Washington State.

## Results

Post-evaluations of the hands-on educational programming evaluations indicated 81% of the participants of the Skagit County Hands-on Worker Protection course did not have a pesticide license but worked with pesticides regularly. Course participants had a 19% increase in knowledge of the worker protection standard (WPS), a 27% increase in knowledge of decontamination, a 31% increase in knowledge of personal protective equipment (PPE), a 41% increase in knowledge of mixing and loading, and a 61% increase in the proper use and maintenance in respirators (Figure 1). The average increase in the five areas of the Hands-on Worker Protection Standard among Hispanic and English participants in 2014 was 36% (Table 1).



(Figure 1)

MODULES	PRE	POST	DIFF
PPE	35%	66%	+31%
Respirators	27%	88%	+61%
Mix & Load	32%	73%	+41%
Decontamination	42%	68%	+27%
WPS	45%	64%	+19%
<b>Totals / Total</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>+36%</b>

(Table 1)

## Summary

Since implementing the Hands-On Worker Protection Course, Skagit County has not had any agricultural worker protection standard violations. Through this training employees in Skagit County have become educated to know the standards that employers and employees must follow regarding safe pesticide use. This information has helped Skagit County become a model for agricultural safety and environmental compliance in Washington State.

## Teaching Methods

The hands-on workshops use an innovative curriculum to educate agricultural workers and supervisors in both English and Spanish in regards to notification of pesticide applications, use of personal protective equipment, restricted entry intervals following pesticide applications, decontamination supplies and emergency medical assistance.

