



# At a Glance

## Why We Did This Project

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this audit to determine how the lack of a Notice of Availability (NOA) of required Agricultural Worker Protection Standard (WPS) training materials affected implementation of the revised rule.

The EPA established the WPS in 1974, expanded it in 1992, and revised it in 2015. Compliance with most of the 2015 revisions was required by January 2, 2017; compliance with all other 2015 revisions—including expanded training—was required by January 1, 2018. Per the 2015 rule, the EPA was to publish a NOA in the Federal Register to inform stakeholders when expanded training materials were available. Employers were then to include this material in their WPS training programs within 180 days of the NOA's publication. The EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs is responsible for regulatory activities associated with the Agricultural WPS.

## This report addresses the following:

- *Ensuring the safety of chemicals.*

Send all inquiries to our public affairs office at (202) 566-2391 or visit [www.epa.gov/oig](http://www.epa.gov/oig).

Listing of [OIG reports](#).

## ***EPA's June 2018 Issuance of the Delayed Notice of Availability of Farm Worker Protection Training Materials Will Reduce Risks of Injury and Illness***

### What We Found

The EPA did not publish a NOA when expanded training materials for the 2015 revised Agricultural WPS were available. As a result, although there were expanded training materials available, the EPA allowed employers to continue to use the "old" pesticide safety training materials. These "old" training materials did not include the revised 2015 WPS requirements, which were designed to reduce the risk of injury and illness from pesticide exposure.

**Over 2 million agricultural workers and pesticide handlers are protected by the WPS. Revisions to the standard, including expanded training, are intended to reduce exposure to pesticides and provide enhanced protection to these workers, handlers and their families.**

In addition, in a notice of proposed rulemaking published December 21, 2017, the agency announced its intention to further revise the WPS. In this notice, the EPA said it would not issue a NOA for the expanded training materials until the additional rulemaking process was completed. However, the EPA also said that the original compliance dates for the revised standard would remain in effect.

On June 22, 2018, after the start of this audit, the EPA revised its position and published a NOA for the expanded 2015 revised training materials. The Office of Pesticide Programs' website was also updated to reference the NOA. By publishing the NOA, the EPA is advancing its mission to provide agricultural workers, handlers and employers with the most recent training materials to help mitigate the risk of pesticide exposure.

Since the EPA has already acted to address the findings in this report, the OIG makes no recommendations.