

## Report details pesticides risk in, near schools

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Two years ago, a Dallas High School teacher became sick and went to a hospital after insecticide labeled "never use indoors" was used inside a classroom.

In some cases studied by the Oregon Toxics Alliance, entire schools were evacuated after pesticides were used nearby.

And in at least one case, at Lebanon High School last year, students were assigned to use pesticides on school property without proper equipment.

The incidents are among 43 cases reported in the past 10 years of pesticides used in schools, or on or near school grounds, according to a report released Monday by the alliance.

The nonprofit used public records to study pesticide use in and near schools, finding 56 cases statewide in which childhood pesticide exposure was reported since 1990.

"This is really the tip of the iceberg," said Dona Hippert, board chairperson of Oregon Toxics Alliance.

A State Senate Workgroup on Pesticides In and Around Schools is working on the issue and drafting legislation for the 2009 session.

"If we can protect our salmon, why can't we protect our kids?" Hippert said, referring to the pesticide "buffer zones" required around some Oregon waterways that support coho or chinook salmon.

The report suggests requiring Integrated Pest Management practices in schools, preschools and day-care facilities.

The practices take into account the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. The agency describes it as combining "common-sense" practices in "effective and environmentally sensitive" manners.

Michelle Holman, a school board member and parent in Mapleton School District, said there are many unanswered questions concerning childhood exposure to pesticides.

"Our children must not be guinea pigs," she said.

Children especially are vulnerable to pesticide exposure because they still are developing, the report says.



View looking south towards Dallas High School through the school's southeast parking lot. Two years ago, a Dallas High School teacher became sick and went to a hospital after insecticide labeled "never use indoors" was used inside a classroom.

### Online

For a link to Oregon Toxics Alliance's report, "Warning! Hazards to Children: Pesticides in Our Schools," see this story at [StatesmanJournal.com](http://StatesmanJournal.com).

### Learn more

To view Oregon Toxics Alliance's report, "Warning! Hazards to Children: Pesticides in Our Schools," go to [www.oregontoxics.org](http://www.oregontoxics.org).

"A growing body of scientific evidence confirms that even minute amounts of pesticides can adversely affect a child's neurological, respiratory, reproductive, immune and endocrine systems," the report says.

About 25 percent of all developmental disorders, including learning disorders, are caused by exposure to toxins, including pesticides, said Sue Koger, a psychology professor at Willamette University.

"We should be acting to prevent exposure," Koger said. "... Pesticides are toxic by design."

Few schools in Oregon are completely pesticide free, according to a 2005 survey of public schools by Oregon Environmental Council.

About 13 percent of districts participating in the survey said they never use pesticides. About 87 percent said they do use pesticides, mostly on school grounds, athletic fields and playgrounds to control weeds.

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