



# Driftwatch™

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

*Driftwatch™ is a program that allows beekeepers and farmers who grow sensitive crops to register online, letting pesticide applicators know where their operations are located. It is a way for these two groups to communicate, and adds an extra layer of protection against damage to crops or bee yards. You can find the registration website at [driftwatch.org](http://driftwatch.org).*

**How does Driftwatch™ work?**

- Producers create a password-protected account, and mark their fields or beeyards on a Google satellite map.
- Applicators check the map before applying pesticides to see if there are sensitive crops near their work site.
- Producers may choose to have their contact information pop up when the applicator clicks on their location.
- Although the grower's or beekeeper's account is password-protected, the map showing all the registered sites is a public document. Applicators do not need to register to view it, and the general public can view it.
- Applicators who choose to register receive notifications when new sites are added to their areas.

**What crops are eligible for Driftwatch™?**

- All organic crops
- Berries
- Christmas trees
- Cranberries
- Floriculture
- Fruit trees
- Grapes/vineyards
- Hops
- Herbs
- Nursery crops
- Pastures
- Tomatoes
- Market vegetables
- There is an "other" category to allow for any specialty crop not listed.
- Beehives and high tunnel greenhouses also qualify.

**Can anyone register as a producer?**

- Commercial crop sites registered on Driftwatch™ that are at least a half acre.
- All bee yards are eligible, regardless of size or commercial status.

**Is there a fee?**

- Driftwatch™ is completely free for both producers and applicators.

**How can Driftwatch™ prevent pesticide drift?**

- Although applicators must always take precautions to prevent drift or overspray, they may take additional steps beyond their normal procedures if they know that a sensitive crop or a bee yard is near their work site. For example, they may allow wider buffer zones, change their application method, or wait for better weather conditions.

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**How can Driftwatch™ prevent pesticide drift? (continued)**

- Driftwatch™ opens a way for producers and applicators to communicate. Better relationships may help prevent misunderstandings, and applicators and producers may try harder to accommodate one another's needs.
- The more producers who register, the more applicators will use Driftwatch™.
- Driftwatch™ is not a substitute for state law.

**What does Wisconsin's law say about pesticide drift?**

- Pesticide drift and overspray are illegal under both state and federal law.
- Wisconsin law says, "No person may use or direct the use of a pesticide in a manner that results in pesticide overspray or significant pesticide drift." {ATCP 29.50(2)}
- "Significant" means that enough pesticide has moved off target:
  - To harm or potentially harm people, property or the environment
  - To be readily visible
- Some pesticides may "volatilize," meaning that they may evaporate after application. This vapor may drift, even if the pesticide was applied properly. It is often difficult to find the source of volatilized drift, especially if the pesticide involved is widely used.

**What should I do if I suspect drift or overspray?**

- Record as much information as you know about the incident, including:
  - Time of application
  - Name of application company
  - Pesticide applied
  - Weather during application, including temperature, wind speed and direction
  - Names of any other potential witnesses
  - Any damage observed
  - Photos and videos if possible
- Call 608-224-4500 between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. weekdays and say that you want to file a pesticide use complaint.

**What will happen when I file a complaint?**

- A DATCP environmental enforcement specialist will be assigned to investigate your complaint.
- The specialist will talk to you and the applicator, and examine the applicator's records. He or she may collect plant samples to be tested at the DATCP laboratory for pesticides or pesticide metabolites (breakdown products), talk with witnesses, and take whatever other steps are appropriate for your particular case.
- If DATCP finds that drift or overspray has occurred, actions may range from warnings all the way to the district attorney filing charges. Penalties range from \$100 up to \$5,000 and a year in prison, depending on whether the applicator knowingly violated the law, had previous violations, and is a commercial or private applicator.

**Can I be reimbursed for damage?**

- State law does not provide for compensation to the victim when someone violates pesticide regulations.
- Producers are free to file civil lawsuits to try to recover damages.

**For more information**

- Call 608-224-4500 or email [DATCPPesticideinfo@wi.gov](mailto:DATCPPesticideinfo@wi.gov)



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