

Agricultural pesticide licensing: Frequently asked questions

By Danielle
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Editor's note: This article grants one continuing education unit (CEU) in the Core category toward the renewal of a Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services restricted-use pesticide license when the accompanying test is submitted and approved.

Many pesticide applicators are unfamiliar with the pesticide licensing process and keeping their licenses current after attending pesticide training or production meetings where continuing education units (CEUs) are offered. This article provides some insight into the agricultural licensing process and addresses some of the frequently asked questions associated with being a certified pesticide applicator in the state of Florida.

Q: How do I know if I need a pesticide license?

A: The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) requires that anyone applying

Q: How do I know if a pesticide is restricted-use?

A: The EPA classifies pesticides according to their toxicity, use pattern and environmental effects. A pesticide is considered a restricted-use pesticide if it might result in an unreasonable adverse effect on human health and/or the environment. This risk is reduced by requiring applicators to be trained. Any pesticide that is restricted-use will be labeled as such on the very top of the first page of the pesticide label. This box (Figure 1) will have the restricted-use pesticide designation and the reasons it requires this label. Restricted-use pesticides may only be purchased and used by those with a valid pesticide applicator license or those working under the direct supervision of a licensed applicator.

Q: What is direct supervision?

A: Direct supervision allows a licensed applicator to oversee an unlicensed applicator. There are instances where this is *not* allowed, as with paraquat, where *only* licensed applicators may touch the product. Most other products do allow for direct supervision. In general, to directly supervise an unlicensed applicator, the supervisor (licensed applicator) must:

- Be available by phone at all times
- Be able to get to the application site
- Provide training to unlicensed applicators about personal protective equipment, safety, proper pesticide use and the nearest medical facility

Always refer to the label to ensure direct supervision is allowed and what conditions must be met. Many newer labels are adding language to the label that requires the direct supervisor (licensed applicator) to be on site during the application.

Refer to edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/PI293 for more specific information.

RESTRICTED USE PESTICIDE

Toxic to fish and aquatic organisms

For retail sale to and use only by certified applicators, or persons under their direct supervision and only for those uses covered by the certified applicator's certification.

Figure 1. The restricted-use pesticide designation can be found on the pesticide label. This pesticide is classified as restricted-use due to its toxicity to fish and aquatic organisms.

restricted-use pesticides be certified or work under the direct supervision of a certified or licensed applicator. In the state of Florida, anyone applying aerial pesticides to agricultural sites or related sites is required to have a pesticide applicator license. Many employers may also require individuals to hold a license.

Q: Who is responsible for pesticide licensing and certification?

A: In the state of Florida, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) is the agency responsible for issuing pesticide licenses and regulating pesticide applicators.

Q: How do I know which type of pesticide license I need?

A: This depends on your job and where you will be applying pesticides. Pesticide licensing is issued through FDACS under three Florida Statutes (see Table 1). Citrus growers fall under Chapter 487 Florida Pest Control Law. Under this law, there are three license classifications that an applicator can fall under (see Table 2).

In addition to the license classifications, Chapter 487 also defines various pest control categories. These categories specify where or how a particular licensed applicator may apply restricted-use pesticides. Regardless of license class, an applicator must be licensed in at least one pest control category. An applicator can be licensed in more than one category. There are 20 different pest control categories. Categories most relevant to citrus growers would be private or agricultural tree crops. Refer to edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/PI292 for more information about each of the license types and what is required to receive and keep that license.

Table 1

Florida Pesticide Statutes		Pesticide Application Site
Florida Mosquito Control	Chapter 388	Area-wide mosquito control or control of other arthropods of public health significance
Structural Pest Control	Chapter 482	Any pesticide (restricted-use pesticide or general use) inside or to any part of a building or structure, ornamentals and turf associated with a building (lawns and plant beds). (General use applications to your yard and residence are exempt.)
Florida Pest Control Law	Chapter 487	Agricultural areas, industrial areas and any outdoor areas not associated with buildings or public health

Table 2

Applicator Class (AG)	Applicator's Occupation or Employer	More Details
Private	Farmer, rancher, nurseryman, sod producer, landowner	Applies restricted-use pesticides (RUPs) for producing agricultural commodities or nursery plants on their property or that of their employer
Public	State, city, or county; public utility, university	Applies RUPs as part of their normal job duties to agricultural land for their employer — usually government agencies, utility companies, university research plots
Commercial	For-hire	Applies RUPs to agricultural property in a for-hire capacity other than public health pest control or as a pest control operator business

Q: How do I obtain a pesticide license?

A: All applicants must pass the certification exams to be eligible for a license. A passing grade of 70% is required on all exams.

Private Applicator License:

Two certification exams are required to obtain a private applicator license:

- General Standards (Core) exam

- Private Applicator Ag Pest Control exam

Public or Commercial Applicator License:

Two certification exams are required to obtain a public or commercial applicator license:

- General Standards (Core) exam
- Exams for each category of intended use

Q: Where do I take my pesticide licensing exam?

A: Most pesticide applicator certification exams can be taken in person at your local University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension office or remotely online. Historically, pesticide applicator certification exams were only offered in-person at local Extension offices. Now, those seeking to become a licensed applicator have the option to test remotely in the convenience of their home or any location with a good internet connection, 24-7. Visit pesticideexam.ifas.ufl.edu for more information.

Q: Is there a fee to take the exam?

A: For Chapter 487 applicators, there is no fee to take the exam in-person. There is, however, a \$26 fee to test remotely online.

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Q: What study materials and/or classes are available for exam preparation?

A: To prepare for the pesticide certification exams, training manuals for most pest control categories are available from the UF/IFAS Bookstore (ifasbooks.ifas.ufl.edu). Training classes in the General Standards (Core) and most pest control categories are also provided by UF/IFAS Extension offices across the state. Each county office sets its own training schedule, so contact your local office directly for classes.

Q: What is the duration and cost of the license?

A: All three license types are valid for four years. Private and Public licenses are \$100 each. A Commercial license is \$250.

Q: How do I keep my license current and up to date?

A: License renewal is required every four years. With renewal comes recertification. Applicators have the option of recertifying by either retaking the certification exam or accumulating CEUs during the four-year license period. Most applicators opt to renew by accumulating CEUs.

Q: Where can I earn CEUs?

A: CEUs are earned by attending professional meetings, seminars and workshops or by completing online courses that have been approved by FDACS. Many Extension production meetings offer CEUs for free or at a discounted rate.

The UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office (ifas-pest.catalog.instructure.com) offers a variety of online CEU courses at a discounted rate.

Another option for earning free CEU credit is through this CEU Central series of articles in Citrus Industry magazine. Each year, Extension agents collaborate with Citrus Industry magazine to release a series of articles that come with an accompanying test that applicators can read and submit for grading. Once approved, one CEU is granted per article. Up to four CEUs in the CORE category per year can be earned this way. Be sure to submit the test at the end of this article to earn your CEU!

An additional option for applicators



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is to visit <https://aesearch.fdacs.gov/AvailableClassSearch.asp> to search for available CEU classes.

Q: How many CEUs do I need for renewal?

A: The number of CEUs required for renewal depends upon the type of license and pest control category (see Table 3).

Table 3

Chapter 487 CEU Requirement Examples		
Category	Category CEUs	Core CEUs
Private	4	4
Aerial	16	4
Ag Row Crop	8	4
Ag Tree Crop	8	4

Q: How many CEUs do I have?

A: During the four years, it is the applicator's responsibility to keep up with any earned CEU Record of Attendance forms obtained. Many Extension offices that offer CEUs do, however, keep CEU record forms on hand. FDACS also has an earned CEU search tool (<https://aesearch.fdacs.gov/EarnedCEU.asp>) available online.

Keep in mind that not all CEU providers enter CEU record attendance into the FDACS online system, so the CEU count listed online may not always be accurate. If you are unsure, check with your Extension agent.

Q: How do I renew my license?

A: FDACS sends renewal notices to all licensees approximately 60 days before the license expiration date. To renew, the applicator must complete the renewal notice and send in their CEU attendance forms along with their payment. Applicators can pay their renewal fees and upload their documents online (see <https://aesecomm.fdacs.gov>).

Q: What happens if my license has expired?

A: Once a license is expired, it is illegal to purchase or use

restricted-use products. The date on your license is the date you are no longer considered certified. There is a grace period of 60 days after your license has expired for renewal without any additional fees. After this grace period expires, the applicator will be charged a \$50 late renewal fee. After 365 days from expiration, the license is permanently expired, meaning a new license is needed and *all* examinations must be redone.

Q: What changes are coming to the licensing process?

A: Much like how all pesticides must be reregistered with the EPA, the process by which applicators become licensed is reviewed and altered as well. Recently, the EPA updated its standards for pesticide licensing and made changes to the Certification and Training standards. The changes are minor, and most in the state of Florida will have no idea changes have been made. Although the plan from Florida still needs to be finalized, there are a few changes worth noting:

1. Private applicators will be required to have an additional category added to their license if they use any fumigants.
2. Direct supervision requirements will be strengthened and will involve more formal training and record-keeping requirements. Direct supervision will resemble the Worker Protection Standard more.
3. Anyone with a license *must* be at least 18 years old.

The Florida plan is not finalized, and all these changes won't be in effect for several years. If you are currently licensed, it is unlikely you will need to do anything to be compliant with the new standards. Many of the manuals and exams in the state will have to be updated, but the average applicator will have minimal requirements on their end. More information will be shared by UF/IFAS Extension and FDACS as changes are finalized. For more information on pesticide applicator licensing, contact your local UF/IFAS Extension office. 🍊

Danielle Sprague is a multicounty commercial horticulture agent for UF/IFAS Extension Gadsden County in Quincy.

'Agricultural pesticide licensing: Frequently asked questions' test

To receive one Core continuing education unit (CEU), read "Agricultural pesticide licensing: Frequently asked questions" in this issue of Citrus Industry magazine. Answer the 20 questions on the magazine's website (www.CitrusIndustry.net) or mail the answers and application information to the address at the end of this test. You must answer 70% of the questions correctly to receive one Core CEU. The article and test set are valid for up to one year from the publication date. After one year, this test will no longer grant a CEU.

1. The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act requires anyone who applies restricted-use pesticides to hold a pesticide applicator license. T F
2. Aerial pesticide applicators are exempt from holding a pesticide license. T F
3. Restricted-use pesticides must have a restricted-use designation on the label. T F
4. Restricted-use pesticides can only be purchased by certified applicators. T F
5. University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension regulates pesticide applicators. T F
6. Pesticide training and licensing exams are administered at Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) offices across the state. T F
7. Pesticide licensing exams can be taken online, 24-7. T F
8. Paraquat can be applied under the direct supervision of an applicator and does not require a pesticide license. T F
9. Pesticide licensing falls under three Florida Statutes. T F
10. Individuals applying pesticides to agricultural areas fall under the Chapter 487 Statute. T F
11. If I am applying restricted-use pesticides on my farm, I need a commercial applicator license. T F
12. Applicators can be licensed in more than one pest control category. T F
13. License renewal is required every three years. T F
14. CEUs are earned by attending FDACS-approved courses. T F
15. Private applicators need 12 CEUs total for license renewal. T F
16. It is my responsibility as a certified applicator to keep a record of any earned CEU forms for license renewal. T F
17. Once a pesticide license has expired, it is illegal to apply restricted-use pesticides. T F
18. A _____ applicator applies restricted-use pesticides on personally owned property.

A. Commercial
B. Private
C. Public
D. General
19. A _____ applicator is for hire to apply restricted-use pesticides to agricultural commodities.

A. Commercial
B. Private
C. Public
D. General
20. Which regulatory agency is responsible for administering the three Florida statutes that govern pesticide applicator licensing?

A. Department of Environmental Protection
B. Environmental Protection Agency

C. FDACS
D. UF/IFAS

Please circle the number below to rate this article and test:

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Pesticide Applicator CEU Form

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
 Email: _____ Phone: _____
 Pesticide License Number: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

**Return the
completed test via
mail or email to:**

Danielle Sprague
 UF/IFAS Extension Gadsden County
 2140 W. Jefferson Street
 Quincy, FL 32351
dsprague@ufl.edu

If you have questions regarding this form, test or CEUs, email Danielle Sprague at dsprague@ufl.edu or call 850-875-7255. Please allow two weeks to process your CEU request.

