

Certification (Testing) and Recertification (Continuing Education) Requirements

The type and number of exams required to obtain certification varies depending on the type of license needed. All licensees are required to pass a core exam, which is a written test covering general pesticide information.

Private applicators must also pass a commodity exam which measures knowledge of pest management practices for a given crop or crop family. Private commodities include animal, vegetables, forestry, cranberry, blueberry, forage, greenhouse, orchard fruit, nursery, potatoes, small fruit and turf. A licensed grower can use pesticides to grow any commodity.

Commercial licensees must pass one or more category exam. Each category exam tests knowledge of pest management practices pertinent to the specific profession where pesticides are used, such as in forestry, lawn care or structural pest control. To obtain a *commercial master* license it is necessary to also pass a written regulation exam and a master exam.

Pesticide use is a rapidly changing technology. New products, new pests, application methods, safety standards and regulations are introduced every year. To be recertified, the BPC requires applicators to receive approved continuing education training, which is offered by BPC, University of Maine Cooperative Extension (UMCE), and industry and trade organizations. Credit is also accepted for attending out-of-state sessions. Recertification requirements are outlined below.

| Type of License | Exams Required | Exam Fees | License Information | License Cost | Recertification Requirements |
|---------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Agricultural Basic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core | None | Expires 10/31 of third year | \$15 | 3 hours in 3 years |
| Private | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core Commodity | None | Expires 10/31 of third year | \$15 | 6 hours in 3 years |
| Commercial Master | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core Category Regulation exam Master exam | \$10 for the core, each category exam and the regulation exam. \$40 for the master oral exam* | Expires 12/31 of third year | \$105 | 9 hours in 3 years |
| Commercial Operator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core Category | \$10 for the core and each category exam* | Expires 12/31 of third year | \$105 | 6 hours in 3 years |

*Commercial exam and license fees are waived for government employees.

Testing Process

Agricultural Basic and Private License Exams

Exams are offered through county offices of UMCE. Applicants should call the BPC at 207-287-2731, to confirm licensing needs and testing locations. Exams may also be scheduled using the BPC online portal at www.maine.gov/bpc. Once exams are passed, the candidate is certified for three years and is eligible for a license.

Commercial Exams

Exams may be scheduled using the BPC online portal at www.maine.gov/bpc or by submitting an exam application form, available at www.thinkfirstspraylast.org, along with payment if required (see chart). Once exams are passed, the candidate is certified for three years and is eligible for a license.

Study Materials

The BPC strongly urges use of self-study materials available for purchase through UMCE's Pest Management Office, 491 College Ave, Orono, Maine 04473; telephone 207-581-3880 or 800-287-0279 or on their website: www.umaine.edu/ipm/pesticide-safety/



Maine Board of
Pesticides Control

Licensing Requirements for Pesticide Applicators in the State of Maine

Maine Board of Pesticides Control
www.thinkfirstspraylast.org
207-287-2731
pesticides@maine.gov



Applicator Licensing

Pesticides are important tools which, in the hands of skilled applicators, offer numerous benefits. Increased crop yields, reduced crop losses, safer highways, enhanced landscapes and infestation-free structures are just a few. As with any powerful tool, proper and effective use of pesticides depends upon the judgment of the trained applicator. . . especially when considering products which could potentially affect public health and natural resources.

The pesticide applicator *license* represents recognition of an individual's qualifications to use pesticides properly.

In order to become licensed in Maine, individuals must first earn *certification*, which shows proficiency in pest management, pesticide use and safety. This competence is demonstrated through successful completion of examinations offered by the **Board of Pesticides Control (BPC)**. This state agency then issues licenses to certified individuals once fees are paid and, if needed, insurance requirements are met.



Types of Licenses

The need for a pesticide applicator license depends upon the type of pesticide used and the circumstances in which the pesticide is applied. In Maine, pesticide applicator licenses fall into three major categories:

1) AGRICULTURAL BASIC

The *Agricultural Basic* pesticide applicator license is for growers who annually sell more than \$1,000 of plants or plant products intended for human consumption and who use only general-use (over-the-counter) pesticides on property owned or leased by them. These include:

- Growers of fruits, vegetables, herbs and grains for human consumption;
- Growers of the above crops who make bread, jam, french fries, wine, cider, juice, etc., or who sell produce to be processed into these products; and
- Greenhouse growers selling fruit, vegetable and herb seedlings.



2) PRIVATE

The *Private* applicator license is for those wishing to purchase and use restricted-use, as well as general-use, pesticides in the production of agricultural commodities on property owned or leased by them. These typically include:

- Farmers
- Greenhouse and nursery operators
- Orchardists
- Christmas tree growers
- Foresters

3) COMMERCIAL

The *Commercial* applicator license is for professionals using any pesticide in a variety of occupations. A commercial license is required in all of the following situations:

- Application of *any* restricted-use pesticide for purposes other than producing an agricultural commodity;
- Use of *any* pesticide as a service for which compensation is received. Examples include lawn and landscape care; tree and shrub care; and home pest control;

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- Use of *any* pesticide in a licensed food or eating establishment;
- Use of *any* pesticide in connection with duties as an official or employee of federal, state or local government, including municipal agencies, schools, universities and housing authorities; and
- Use of *any* pesticide on non-agricultural sites *open to public use*. Property is considered open to use by the public when the owner permits routine access by the public, even if a fee is charged for such use. Examples include office and apartment buildings and grounds; golf courses, campgrounds and other outdoor recreation facilities; hospitals and nursing homes; retail and commercial spaces.

Levels of Commercial Applicator Licensing:

- **Operator**—the minimum requirement for individuals employed as technicians under the supervision of a *licensed master applicator*. The operator license is in effect only if the employing company or organization has at least one licensed master applicator;
- **Master**—required for one individual within each company, organization, branch office or agency. This license is for the person responsible for major pest management decisions, for establishing policies related to proper pesticide use and for employee training and overall work practices, generally the owner, supervisor or manager.

What is a Pesticide?

The term pesticide covers a wide range of products. By definition, a pesticide is any substance used to kill, control or repel undesired insects, weeds fungi, bacteria, rodents or other organisms. Pesticides may be made from natural, biologic, or synthetic ingredients and some are approved for organic use. Pesticides include insecticides (bug killers); herbicides, (weed killers, including 'weed & feed' products); fungicides (disease controls); rodenticides; defoliants; growth regulators; and disinfectants (including mold controls).

Pesticides registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are tested for human and environmental effects and registered for use—these products display an EPA registration number on the label. Some pesticide products are exempt from testing and registration by the EPA but are not exempt from registration by the BPC—these products do not have an EPA registration number on the label and have not been tested. General-use pesticides are available for use by homeowners and gardeners; however in some cases an applicator license is required to use general-use pesticides. Restricted-use pesticides are so designated by the EPA and always require an applicator license for use.