



Pesticide Licensing for Professional Mosquito Control

Many people who use, sell or consult on the use of pesticides must be licensed by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). If you are using pesticides for mosquito control, this fact sheet provides guidance on licensing requirements.

Who must have a WSDA pesticide license?

Anyone who:

- Applies a restricted use pesticide.
- Engages in the business of applying pesticides.
- As a public employee, applies any restricted use pesticides or any pesticide through power equipment.
- Consults about or sells non-home and garden pesticides.



What license categories (also known as endorsements) must I have for mosquito control?

Public Health Pest Control category allows applying both larvicides and adulticides at any site, including aquatic applications. Aquatic Pest Control allows applying only aquatic larvicides and adulticides. The Aquatic Irrigation category does NOT allow mosquito control applications.

These categories allow applying adulticide on sites that are covered by the category:

- Agricultural Insect and Disease.
- Ornamental Insect and Disease.
- Pest Control Operator (PCO) - General.

Livestock Pest Control allows applying any pesticide on and around livestock.

Private Applicators must have the Aquatic Pest Control category to apply larvicide to water that flows off their agricultural property. The Private Applicator License alone is enough for applying to standing water that does NOT flow off the agricultural property.

What exams must I pass to be certified for mosquito control?

If you meet the definition of a Private Applicator, you must take that exam. All other new pesticide applicators must pass the Laws and Safety exam, in addition to the correct category for the type of application you are making – see list above.

How can I prepare for the exams?

Washington State University (WSU) Pesticide Education Program offers study materials for all pesticide license categories related to mosquito control. WSU offers general pre-license training courses in the winter months at

statewide locations. WSU also has online pre-license training programs for all applicable exams. These include Laws and Safety, Private Applicator, Aquatic Pest Control, Public Health, Ornamental Insect and Disease, and Agricultural Insect and Disease. Go to pep.wsu.edu for information.

In addition, Mosquito Control Districts and associations may offer training.

Where can I take the pesticide exams?

To learn more about the exam process, including where and when exam sessions are held, go to our website: agr.wa.gov and put "Taking exams" in the search box. To make a reservation to take an exam, call WSDA at 877-301-4555 (toll free).

Helpful terms and definitions

Agricultural Insect and Disease	<i>Category for the control of insects and diseases in agricultural crops including forest environments.</i>
Commercial Applicator	<i>Anyone engaged in the business of applying pesticides to the land or property of others.</i>
Commercial Operator	<i>Any employee of a Commercial Applicator who applies or supervises the use of any pesticide as part of the business. They may also consult on the use of pesticides.</i>
Dealer Manager	<i>Anyone who sells non-home and garden pesticides from a Pesticide Dealer distribution outlet. They can give advice from within the outlet, but may not apply pesticides or consult outside the outlet.</i>
Engage in business	<i>The act of applying pesticides on lands or property of another.</i>
Ornamental Insect and Disease	<i>Category for the control of insects and diseases in ornamental, turf, and rights-of-way situations including but not limited to golf courses, parks, schools, lawns, yards, gardens, greenhouses, hospitals, and rest homes.</i>
Pest Control Operator (PCO) General	<i>Category for the control of insects, spiders, birds, rodents, and animal pests in and around, but not limited to, the following situations: Residences, public buildings and grounds, commercial buildings and grounds, disposal sites, animal feed lots and farmsteads, including buildings and transportation equipment.</i>
Private Applicator	<i>Anyone who applies or supervises the use of a restricted use pesticide to their own or their employer's agricultural land, including farms, ranches, greenhouses, nurseries, and forests.</i>
Private Commercial Applicator	<i>Anyone who applies or supervises the use of a restricted use pesticide to their own or their employer's non-agricultural land, including apartment complexes, private golf courses, private institutions, apple warehouses, and grain storage facilities.</i>
Public Operator	<i>Any public employee who, as part of their public agency job, applies or supervises the use of any restricted use pesticide or any pesticide through power equipment. They may also consult on the use of pesticides. Public includes city, county, state, federal, and public utility.</i>
Public or Commercial Consultant	<i>Anyone who makes recommendations or gives advice to the user of any non-home and garden pesticide. Consultants are not licensed to apply pesticides.</i>
Restricted Use Pesticide	<i>Any pesticide classified as restricted use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or WSDA at the time it is registered. Most pesticides applied to water are designated as state restricted use by WSDA. Larvicides labeled only for home and garden use are not state restricted use pesticides.</i>