Pesticide Licensing in Montana

The use and sale of pesticides are regulated for the protection of people and their environment. Pesticides are considered valuable and necessary to provide sufficient quantity of quality foods and to provide protection to humans from vector borne diseases.

However, the protection from pesticides that are potentially dangerous is in the public interest for all people and their essential needs such as water, air, food, livestock, vegetation, pollinating insects, and shelter. The Montana Pesticides Act was established to help protect these interests and the Montana Department of Agriculture has the responsibility of administering and enforcing the Act.

The following is a brief summary of some important points that dealers and applicators need to know to become licensed.

WHO NEEDS TO BE LICENSED?

Pesticide Dealer - Any person who sells pesticides in or into Montana except those pesticides used only for home, yard, and garden use.

Pesticide Applicator -

Commercial Applicator - A person, who by contract or for hire, applies pesticides to land, plants, seed, animals, structures, vehicles, or water.

Non-Commercial Applicator - A person who cannot be classified as a commercial, governmental, public utility or private pesticide applicator, but desires to apply restricted use pesticides.

Public Utility Applicator - A person who applies pesticides to land owned or leased by a public utility.

Governmental Applicator - A person who applies pesticides for a city, county or state or other government agency to public land or right-of-way, or as a public service.

Private Applicator - Any person who applies restricted use pesticides to his/her own crop, land, or leased lands.

Note: If you feel you are a private applicator, contact your local MSU county extension agent for information on becoming certified to obtain a special use permit.

HOW IS A LICENSE OBTAINED?

Before obtaining a license, competency standards must be met. This is demonstrated through testing. Core certification is required for all pesticide applicators and dealers wishing to become licensed in the state of Montana. This is accomplished by learning how to handle pesticides correctly and how to protect yourself, others, and the environment from pesticide misuse. License classifications (categories) are based on the type of pest control to be performed. The specific classification(s) shall determine the type, substance, and comprehensiveness of each applicant's examinations and the areas, classes of pesticides, and conditions by which the applicant may conduct pesticide operations.

Requirements for Licensing

Commercial and Governmental Dealers must:

- ✓ Pass a core exam with an 80% or better.
- ✓ Complete the required application form.
- ✓ Pay the license fee of $85 for Commercial licenses, $70 for Governmental licenses.

Commercial, Non-Commercial and Public Utility Applicators must:

- ✓ Pass required exams (core exam as well as category specific exams) with an 80% or better for general-use and/or restricted use products.
- ✓ Meet liability insurance coverage requirements.
- ✓ Complete the application form.
- ✓ Pay the license fee of $85.

Governmental Applicators must:

- ✓ Pass required exams (core exam plus category specific exams) with an 80% or better for general-use and/or restricted use products.
- ✓ Complete the required application form.
- ✓ Pay the license fee, $15 to $70 based on number of applicators up to a government maximum of $895. (Applicants licensing for federal government or tribal agencies are exempt from licensing fees).

WHERE ARE APPLICATIONS OBTAINED?

The pesticide applicator and dealer application form is available from the main Helena office as well as from the field offices. An application may also be downloaded and printed from the Pesticide Licensing page. An application may only be submitted after the successful completion of the required exams. The application packet must also contain all required documents and fees paid in full.

LIABILITY?

Commercial applicators, except wood product treatment and seed treatment classifications, must meet financial liability requirements. These liability requirements may only be met through liability insurance. A commercial pesticide applicator must show proof of financial responsibility before a license is issued. Once a record of financial responsibility is on file, the license holder must affirm coverage on renewals and provide physical proof of current insurance upon request. The pesticide business must continue to meet or exceed the requirements of Montana Law and Rule (MCA 80-8-214 and ARM 4.10.101) during all periods in which pesticide application will occur. License holders without current liability insurance are noncompliant. The MDA financial responsibility form is linked in the pdfs at the bottom of this webpage for those needing a form to provide proof of financial responsibility.

Minimum Liability Limits:

An aerial applicator must carry minimum liability insurance of $50,000. All other applicators must carry minimum liability insurance of $30,000. The financial responsibility must be maintained in full force and be effective during each entire licensing period.

WHEN IS A LICENSE ISSUED AND FOR HOW LONG?

All requirements for licensing must be met and the application packet complete and in the Helena office before a license can be processed. Only the Helena office processes license applications. Once licensed, individuals must have their license with them before pesticides can be sold, bought, or applied. Licenses are valid for the current calendar year only and must be renewed annually.

Note: Private applicator permits are issued based on a 5-year pre-established recertification cycle.

IS A LICENSE ISSUED TO A BUSINESS OR AN INDIVIDUAL?

A pesticide license is issued to an individual, not a business. Every pesticide business must have at least one licensed individual. Each location selling pesticides must have one or more individuals having separate dealer licenses for each location.

WHEN AND WHERE ARE EXAMS GIVEN?

Please contact your local MDA Field Office to schedule an exam. Exams are available by appointment only. Pesticide exams are based on material from study manuals that are available for purchase from the department. Computer-based testing is also available in Great Falls, Missoula, Bozeman, Butte, Helena, and Glendive through Metro Institute. Please see the Pesticide Licensing page for additional information.

HOW DO I ORDER TRAINING MANUALS?

The Montana Department of Agriculture has a series of training manuals to help pesticide applicators and dealers prepare to be licensed. Manuals can be ordered online at: https://mtplants.mt.gov/CartInfo/PublicCart.aspx, from the Department of Agriculture by completing the linked order form, or purchased at a department field office.

The following is a list of applicator classifications and definitions.

Licensing Classifications:

(10) **Pesticide Dealer** – Any person who sells pesticides within Montana, except the pesticides used for home, yard, and garden use.

(21) **Aerial Applicator** – Applicators that apply pesticides by aircraft (includes drones). Must also obtain at least one other, appropriate category.

(30) **Ag Plant Pest** – Applicator using or supervising the use of pesticides in the production of agricultural crops, including without limiting the foregoing: small grains, feed grains, soybeans and forage, vegetables, small fruits, tree fruits and nuts, as well as on grasslands and non-crop agricultural lands.

(31) **Ag Animal Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides on animals including without limiting the foregoing: beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, sheep, horses, goats, poultry, and livestock, and to places on or in which animals are confined.

(32) **Ag Vertebrate Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides in the management of vertebrate animals normally wild or feral, including certain predators, rodents, and birds, which may adversely affect man's health or property or are a nuisance to man.

(33) **Forest Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides in forests, forest nurseries, and forest seed-producing areas.

(34) **Ornamental and Turf Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides to control pests in the maintenance and reproduction of ornamental trees, shrubs, flowers, and turf.

(35) **Seed Treatment and Elevator Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides onto seeds, the use of fumigants in seed storage areas or on or in seeds and the use of pesticides in or around the elevator seed storage facilities.

(36) **Aquatic Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides purposefully applied to standing or running water, excluding applicators engaged in public health related activities included in the Public Health Pest control classification.

(37) **Right-of-Way, Rangeland, Pasture, and Noncrop Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides to manage weeds or other vegetation in the maintenance of public roads, electric power lines, pipelines, railway rights-of-way, or other similar areas, as well as grassland and pastures that are not harvested for forage, and on noncrop areas.

(38) **Public Health Pest** – State, federal, or other governmental employees or contracted and/or commercial applicators using or supervising use of pesticides in public health programs for the management and control of pests having medical and public health importance.

(39) **Demonstration and Research Pest** – This classification includes: a) Individuals who demonstrate to the public the proper use of pesticides and pesticide application techniques or supervise such demonstrations or make or approve recommendations on pesticide product use and/or selection. (Persons licensed as pesticide dealers are exempt from this classification); b) Individuals conducting field research with pesticides and in doing so, use or supervise the use of pesticides. Must also obtain at least one other appropriate category.

(40) **Industrial, Institutional, Structural, and Health Related Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides in, on, or around food handling and manufacturing establishments, human dwellings, institutions such as schools and hospitals, industrial establishments and any other structures and adjacent areas, public or private.

(41) **Wood Product Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides for pole framing, silling applications, some home and farm uses, brush on treatments, sapstain control, and uses in non-pressure treatment plants for the protection of wood products.

(43) **Sodium Cyanide (M-44)** - Applicators using M-44 cyanide capsules in M-44 ejector devices to control certain wild canids: coyotes, red fox, gray fox, and wild dogs that depredate livestock and poultry. Must have special training with Montana Department of Agriculture Vertebrate Specialist after passing written exam.

(44) **Special Utility Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides in the maintenance of utility rights of ways, substations, and pole conditioning or other similar areas.

(45) **School Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides in the school environment under a “Model School Integrated Pest and Pesticide Management Safety Program” including, but not limited to school yards, buildings, playing fields, and other property under the jurisdiction of the school district. Must also obtain at least one other classification, number 34 or 40.

(46) **Piscicide Pest** – Applicators using or supervising the use of pesticides purposefully applied to waters to eliminate fish species as a fishery management tool.

Governmental classifications

State, Federal, or other government employees who use or supervise the use of pesticides in the control of regulated pests use these additional regulatory pest control classifications:

(50) **Mosquito abatement** – A governmental applicator who applies pesticides to control mosquitoes.

(52) **Predator** – A governmental applicator who uses the M-44 device or Livestock Protection Collar to control vertebrate predators.

(54) **Rodent** – A governmental applicator who applies pesticide in the management of vertebrate animals normally wild or feral.

(55) **Weed** – A governmental applicator who applies pesticides to public roadways or right-of-ways as a public service.