

Clemson University  
Department of Pesticide Regulation

## Keeping Your Turf & Ornamental Pest Control License Current

### *SC Licensing and Recertification Requirements*



*Department of  
Pesticide Regulation*

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Bulletin 29

Recently the South Carolina Legislature enacted changes in the Rules and Regulations for the Enforcement of the South Carolina Pesticide Control Act that made licensing mandatory for applicators in Category 3 (Turf and Ornamental Pest Control).

If you use or apply herbicides, insecticides, or other pesticides to commercially- or privately-owned turf or ornamental plantings for compensation or as a government employee on the property of another, you are required to be licensed. Turf and ornamental pest control activities also includes the soliciting, advertising, or making of sales proposals in any form for any services involving the use of pesticides or devices with the intent to prevent, destroy, repel, or otherwise mitigate any pest of turf or ornamental plantings. Even if you only spray "a little Round-Up® now and then," you are required to be licensed.

#### **How Do I Apply for a Commercial Applicator License?**

To apply for a Commercial Applicator License, you must

- Be at least 18 years old;
- Pass a two-part exam (the Core Exam and your chosen Category Exam);
- Show financial responsibility;
- Fill out the application form; and
- Send in the application and application fee.

The exam is offered at several locations in South Carolina on a regular basis. Part One is the Core Exam, which covers the basic issues of pesticides, human and environmental safety, and proper pesticide application. A score of 70% out of 70 questions is a passing grade. Part Two is a Category Exam that is specific to the type of pesticide application work that you wish to perform. A score of 70% out of 30 questions is a passing grade for each Category Exam. Your exam results will be held on file and may be used to apply for a license for up to five years from the date that you pass the exam.

To keep your license active, you must maintain continuous insurance coverage of **\$50,000 minimum with an aggregate claims limit of not less than \$100,000.** If your insurance lapses, your license will be suspended immediately. You must renew your insurance and reinstate your license within three (3) months of its expiration or by December 31<sup>st</sup>. If you do not renew your insurance and reinstate your license within three (3) months or before your license expires, whichever occurs first, you will be obligated to take the exam again and reapply for your license. There are no exceptions. We cannot accept insurance "binders" in lieu of actual proof of insurance. You must provide an insurance policy number before we can issue a commercial license. A list of companies that provide this type of insurance is available through our department and is normally provided with the license application materials to individuals who have passed the exams.

### How Do I Prepare for the Pesticide Applicator Exam?

Study materials (category manuals) are available to help you prepare for all parts of this exam. It is highly recommended that you purchase study materials; it is unlikely that you will receive a passing grade without these materials. Visit our website to download a printable form to order these materials through PSA Publishing, or order online directly from PSA Publishing at [clemson.edu/psapublishing/](http://clemson.edu/psapublishing/). You may also purchase study materials from your local County Extension office. You must pre-register and pay the appropriate exam fees **no later than two (2) weeks prior to taking the exams**. You will receive your exam results four to six weeks after the exam, and the results are valid for five years. If you are eligible for a license, the appropriate materials will be included with your test results. Exam schedules and pre-registration information can be found on our website.

### What Do I Do after I Get My License?

Once you have obtained your license and insurance, compliance with the rest of the Regulations are relatively straightforward. You may download a copy from our website at [dpr.clemson.edu](http://dpr.clemson.edu). The Regulations require that you

- Disclose to your customers upon their request the chemical or common name of the pesticide you are applying, the pests that the application is intended to control, your company’s name and address, and the name of the licensed applicator responsible for the application.
- Provide the appropriate level of direct supervision to any unlicensed applicators working for you. If the company office from which you begin work each day is located outside of the State of South Carolina you must have a Certified Applicator within 30 minutes of the site of application. He or she must be available immediately by telephone or radio. For applicators based in South Carolina, the Certified Applicator must be within 30 miles of the site and immediately available by phone or radio when Restricted Use Pesticides are being applied. For pesticides with “danger” or “warning” on their label, the Certified Applicator must be within 60 miles and immediately available by phone or radio. If the word “caution” is depicted on the label, they must be within 100 miles of the application site and immediately available by phone or radio. If there are more stringent label requirements, the label requirements have precedence over the Regulations.
- You must maintain records of each pesticide application you make. The record must include the quantity of each pesticide used, the **common chemical name** of the active ingredient (**not** the brand name), the pest or purpose for which the pesticide was applied, and the date and place of the application. These records must be kept for a minimum of two years, and they must be immediately available to any Department of Pesticide Regulation field staff upon request.

There are a few additional provisions of the Regulations that will directly affect commercial applicators in the landscape industry. Applicators should be aware that South Carolina considers descriptive phrases with a legally defined meaning on a pesticide label to be enforceable restrictions on the distribution, sale, storage, and use of the affected product. Descriptions such as “for use only by a certified applicator” or “pest control operator,” for example, mean that the product can be distributed to or used by certified applicators only.

Licenses expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. If you do not renew your license before April 1<sup>st</sup>, you will have to take the examinations again and re-apply for a license. You cannot legally make pesticide applications until your license is renewed.

Finally, any vehicles that are utilized to transport pesticides must bear **two (2)** yellow identification stickers on both the left and right sides (Section 27-1083 B of the Rules and Regulations for the Enforcement of the SC Pesticide Control Act). These stickers are provided by the Department of Pesticide Regulation. Please call our main number at 864.646.2150 for more information.

Anderson..... 843.494.2332  
 Aynor..... 843.957.1727  
 Beaufort..... 843.255.6060 Ext 111  
 Charleston..... 843.225.7065  
 Clemson..... 803.260.1462  
 Columbia..... 803.736.7680 Ext 112

Florence..... 843.667.1393  
 Newberry..... 803.403.7262  
 North Myrtle Beach..... 843.360.1512  
 York..... 803.628.0303