

Licensing of Public Health Pest Control Applicators in Florida¹

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This publication describes the law governing those who make pesticide applications for wide-area mosquito control or for control of other arthropods of public health significance, including midges, sand flies, dog flies, yellow flies, house flies, etc.

Background

The licensing of persons who apply pesticides to sites in Florida for the control of arthropods of public health significance, as well as the licensing of those who supervise the use of such pesticides, is administered by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). These licensing requirements are a part of the Florida Mosquito Control law (Chapter 388, F.S.), which is administered by the FDACS' Bureau of Licensing and Enforcement.

Under this law, persons who supervise the use of restricted-use or unclassified (general-use) pesticides are required to hold a Public Health Pest Control (PHPC) license. The law also requires those who apply these pesticides to be licensed unless they are working under the supervision of a licensed applicator (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Mosquito control application.
Credits: Florida Keys Mosquito Control District

Exceptions to Licensing Requirements

Exemptions to the requirements for Public Health Pest Control (PHPC) license include the following:

- Persons who control arthropods on their own residential or agricultural property do not need to be licensed under Chapter 388, F.S.
- Aquatic plant control and control of all aquatic pests—except mosquito larvae—is regulated by the Bureau of Licensing and Enforcement. Application of products to control aquatic plants and aquatic pests may require a

1. This document is PI169, one of a series of the Agronomy Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date January 2009. Revised February 2015 and February 2018. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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license with the aquatic category issued under Chapter 487, F.S., for application of restricted-use pesticides. For more information, see *Licensing of Aquatic Herbicide Applicators in Florida*, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PI011>.

Category Certification Standards

Applicators seeking a license in the Public Health Pest Control category must demonstrate in a written exam practical knowledge of the following:

- Vector disease transmission as it relates to and influences pesticide-application programs;
- Relevant pests—including recognition, details of life cycle, and habitats;
- Environmental conditions that may affect control of public health arthropods; and
- Importance and employment of non-chemical control methods, such as sanitation, waste disposal, and drainage.

Certifications and Licenses Available

PHPC License. All persons conducting public-health pest control (integrated arthropod control) must have a PHPC license, regardless of whether restricted-use or general-use pesticides are being applied. This category includes public applicators—employed by federal, state, or local governments—using or supervising the application of restricted-use or general-use pesticides in public-health programs for the management and control of pests having medical, public-health, or nuisance importance. This category includes above-ground applications to control mosquitoes, midges, sand flies, dog flies, yellow flies, house flies, etc., as well as aquatic insecticide applications to control aquatic stages of public health pests (larviciding). However, application of restricted-use aquatic herbicides for plant control or plant removal requires an aquatic license, which is issued by the FDACS' Bureau of Licensing and Enforcement according to Chapter 487, F.S.

PHPC License (Aerial Category). Anyone applying pesticides aerially for control of public-health pests—such as mosquitoes, biting flies, etc.—must have a public-health pest control license with aerial category (Figure 2). However, before a public-health aerial category license can be obtained, the individual seeking the license must hold a public-health pest control license. For more detailed information, see *Requirements of Aerial Applicators in Florida*, available at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PI094>.



Figure 2. Aerial application of pesticides to control arthropods of public-health significance over Big Pine Key, FL.

PHPC Director's Certification. Individuals applying for a position as a director of a mosquito control district or director of a county program for mosquito control must obtain a pest control director's certification before employment or within six months of obtaining employment in this role. This exam cannot be taken more than once within any four-month period. This certification is not required for anyone other than mosquito-control directors.

Exam Preparation

Study materials. Depending upon the type of license desired, study materials are available from the UF/IFAS Extension Bookstore—1-800-226-1764 or online at <http://ifasbooks.ifas.ufl.edu/>—as well as from the FDACS Bureau of Licensing and Enforcement—850-617-7997 or online at <https://www.freshfromflorida.com/Business-Services/Mosquito-Control/Mosquito-Control-Licensing>—or from the Florida Mosquito Control Association—239-433-5684 or online at <http://www.floridamosquito.org/>. Table 1, below, lists specific materials and their sources according to license type.

Study classes. Training classes for the General Standards (Core) exam are conducted in many of the UF/IFAS County Cooperative Extension Offices. The FDACS Mosquito Control sponsors training programs to prepare applicators for the PHPC exam. Some PHPC and aerial-application industry organizations offer additional training sessions for these licenses, depending upon type. There is no training session scheduled specifically for public-health directors. However, those seeking pest-control director's certification would also benefit by attending PHPC training sessions.

Exams. The General Standards (Core), Public Health Pest Control, and Aerial exams are administered by most of the UF/IFAS Extension offices throughout the state. To find your local UF/IFAS Extension office consult the following website: <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/map/>. Contact the local office to discuss scheduling arrangements. The other exams are arranged through the FDACS Mosquito Control Program Technical Assistance by calling (850) 617-7929.

[Services/Pesticide-Licensing/Pesticide-Applicator-Licenses/Pesticide-Applicator-Certification-and-Licensing.](#)

UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office, PO Box 110710, Bldg. 164, Gainesville, FL 32611-0710, Phone: 352-392-4721, <http://pested.ifas.ufl.edu/> (February 2018).

Fishel, F.M. 2005. *Requirements of Aerial Applicators in Florida*. PI-58. Gainesville: University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PI094> (February 2018)

Cost and Duration of Certifications and Licenses

There are no fees for licenses or certifications issued for public-health pest control. There is no recertification requirement for the public-health aerial license. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) in the aerial category are not required, and re-testing is not required. Renewal of the public-health aerial license is contingent upon renewal of the PHPC license. The PHPC Director's Certification is valid as long as the PHPC license remains valid.

Recertification

Renewal of the PHPC license may be accomplished by either repeating the initial examination requirements or by attending approved training programs to receive 16 CEUs. Reexamination may be required by FDACS if new knowledge in the use of pesticides is deemed necessary for proof of competency. CEU training programs for recertification credit may be offered by any organization, but all programs must be approved by FDACS before credit is awarded. FDACS, UF/IFAS, industry, and other agencies and organizations work together to make available pesticide seminars and workshops that offer the necessary CEUs for renewal. Information on opportunities to earn CEUs may be found at <http://www.flaes.org/>.

Reciprocal Certification

FDACS reciprocates with Alabama and Georgia on licenses for public-health pest control. Applicants from these states who are seeking such a license in Florida must provide a copy of their current Alabama or Georgia license as proof of certification. In response, a Florida license may be issued.

Additional Information

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Bureau of Licensing and Enforcement. 3125 Conner Drive, Bldg. 8, L-29, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1650, Phone: 850-617-7997, <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Business->

Table 1. Licenses, exams, study materials and their sources.

License Category	Exams Required	Study Manuals and Materials	Source
Public Health	General Standards (Core)	Applying Pesticides Correctly SM001	UF/IFAS Extension Bookstore
	Public Health	Public Health Manual Chapter 388 F.S.—Mosquito Control Chapter 5E-13 FAC—Rules of FDACS Mosquito Control Program Admin.	Bureau of Licensing and Enforcement
Public Health Aerial	General Standards (Core)	Applying Pesticides Correctly SM001	UF/IFAS Extension Bookstore
	Aerial	Aerial Application SM41	
	Public Health	Public Health Manual Chapter 388 F.S.—Mosquito Control Chapter 5E-13 FAC—Rules of FDACS Mosquito Control Program Admin.	Bureau of Licensing and Enforcement
Public Health Director	Public Health Director Exam	Public Health Manual Chapter 388 F.S.—Mosquito Control Chapter 5E-13 FAC—Rules of FDACS Mosquito Control Program Admin.	FDACS Mosquito Control Program Technical Assistance
		Florida Mosquito Control Handbook	Florida Mosquito Control Association