

Professionalism and Pesticides: Supervision¹

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According to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), unless otherwise prescribed by its labeling, a pesticide shall be considered to be applied under the direct supervision of a certified applicator if it is applied by a competent person acting under the instructions and control of a certified applicator who is available if and when needed, even though such certified applicator is not physically present at the time and place the pesticide is applied.



Figure 1. Supervision carries large responsibilities for certified applicators. Credits: F.M. Fishel, UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office.

Florida Law and Supervision

Pesticide use in Florida is regulated by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). Whether supervision (Figure 1) is required under Florida law is determined by the type of work an applicator is engaged in. Whether supervision will be required also depends upon which FDACS bureau issued the applicator license.

Structural Pest Control and Commercial Lawn & Ornamental Pest Control Operators

The FDACS Bureau of Entomology and Pest Control is the agency responsible for these pest control activities. Non-certified employees who perform pest control or solicit pest control for a licensed company must have an employee identification card. Each identification cardholder must be an employee of the licensed company and work under the direct supervision of the certified operator in charge and may not be an independent contractor. Employees must carry identification cards on their persons in order to perform pest control. Identification cards must be current and bear the employees signature and a current photograph. The identification card must be presented on demand to

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the person for whom pest control is being performed or solicited.

Agricultural Pest Control Applicators

The FDACS Bureau of Compliance Monitoring is the agency responsible for these pest control activities. Each licensed applicator must provide to each unlicensed applicator or mixer-loader working under his or her direct supervision adequate instruction and training so that the applicator or mixer-loader understands the safety procedures required for the pesticides that will be used. The applicator or mixer-loader shall be given this training before handling restricted-use pesticides. The training set forth by FDACS includes, but is not limited to:

- safety procedures to be followed as specified on the label;
- safety clothing and equipment to be worn;
- common symptoms of pesticide poisoning;
- the dangers of eating, drinking, or smoking while handling pesticides;
- where to obtain emergency medical treatment;
- the need to wash clothing and bathe after working with pesticides,
- the name and location of the nearest medical facility; and
- how and under what circumstances to contact the licensed applicator.

No licensee is permitted to provide direct supervision to more than 15 unlicensed applicators or mixer-loaders at any given time. Before workers enter into a field, it is the responsibility of the licensed applicator to assure that the workers' direct supervisor provides an oral statement to the workers, in language understood by the workers, of the warning contained on the pesticide label with respect to any pesticides that have been used within a 48-hour period.

Presence of the Certified Applicator

Although some states require that the certified applicator be physically present during the application of any pesticide, Florida is not as stringent. Regardless of license type, certified applicators must be in a location where they can physically arrive on site as needed. The certified applicator must also be immediately available for verbal communication and instruction as needed.

In some cases, product labels may restrict the use of certain pesticides to certified applicators only (Figure 2). In such instances, an uncertified applicator may assist the certified person, but actual handling activities must be performed by the person certified in the appropriate pest control category.

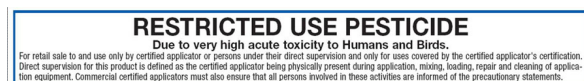


Figure 2. Label statement requiring physical presence of a certified applicator. Credits: CDMS.

Summary

Proper supervision is not merely a single instructional event, but rather a continuing educational process. Maintaining good training records helps to assure management that training throughout the employees career is timely and relevant. Supervision requires continued interaction between the supervisor and the unlicensed person.

Additional Information

Fishel, F.M. 2005. Agricultural and Related Pest Control Applicator License Classifications under the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). UF/IFAS EDIS Document PI-59. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PI095> (viewed May 2008).

Nesheim, O.N. and F.M. Fishel. 2007. Licensing of Lawn and Ornamental Pesticide Applicators in Florida. UF/IFAS EDIS Document PI-7. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PI006> (viewed May 2008).