

Pesticide Use in Demonstration Gardens

Volunteers, have you got weeds nestling in your beds, beetles feasting on your roses, and more mildew than you know what to do with? It's up to you to remedy the situation. You've tried various preventative and cultural tactics; now you are resorting to pesticides. There are several good general use products that are easily obtainable, relatively inexpensive, and available for use by gardeners.

It's D-day for your pest!

You're armed with your pesticide of choice. It's a sunny day with a light breeze. You are properly dressed to protect yourself according to label specifications and the Pesticide Safety chapter in your MG manual. But do you have your pesticide applicator license? Did you know that you needed one?

You must be licensed

Many University of Illinois Master Gardeners are unaware of this. The Illinois Pesticide Act states that if you apply pesticides in the course of your employment or on property you do not own, you must be licensed. This means all pesticides, even the ones you use at your home without a license. There are some exceptions; certain minimum risk pesticides including garlic and garlic oil do not require Federal registration. The list of minimum risk pesticide eligible active ingredients and more information can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/minimum-risk-pesticides/minimum-risk-pesticide-definition-and-product-confirmation>. Illinois has the right to require registration of these products anyway. If it does, you still need a license to apply. You can search for active ingredient registration or call the Illinois Department of Agriculture (numbers given below).

How to obtain a license

You will need to take the General Standards exam (100 multiple-choice questions) and score at least a 70%. This will make you an "operator". However, at least one person from your extension unit will need to go one step further and become an "applicator". Operators work under the direct supervision of the applicator. An operator can become an applicator by scoring at least a 70% on an appropriate category exam (50 multiple-choice questions). There are various categories including pest control in Turf, Ornamentals, Fruit, and Vegetables; each is a separate exam. Since your entire range of pesticide use must be covered by the categories on the applicator's license, this could mean several exams. Another option would be to take the Demonstration and Research category exam which would cover all plants in your demonstration garden. Also, put some consideration into choosing your applicator(s). If the applicator is out of town or not available, the operator may not legally apply pesticides. You must be in daily contact with each other.

The costs involved

As U of I Master Gardeners, you are employees of a state agency so your license will be classified as "Commercial Not-for-Hire" for which the fee is \$120 for Applicators and \$90 for Operators. There is no charge to take any test in-person. Testing is available online but there is a fee. For more information about training and testing, visit: <https://extension.illinois.edu/psep/training-and-testing>. Training is available online and in-person.

The costs of applying without a license are much greater: expensive fines, tarnished reputation, plagues of locusts in your lilies (I'm kidding about this last one).

From Candice-The State Master Gardener program does not cover any costs for volunteers to get a license, however your local Extension county office may be willing to work with you on covering costs. Speak to your local program coordinator.

For further information

Contact the Illinois Dept. of Agriculture for questions concerning testing and licensing or check out their website at

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Pesticides/Pages/Certification-and-Licensing.aspx>.

Study materials are recommended and can be purchased at your local U of I Extension office or ordered through Illinois Extension Distribution Services. For more information about study materials, visit <https://extension.illinois.edu/psep/study-materials>. To learn more about study options, license categories and requirements, go to <http://www.pesticidesafety.illinois.edu/>. Talk to your Master Gardener Coordinator about training and testing options that may be available.

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Regarding Insurance Coverage

For Commercial Not for Hire applicators (which MGs are), there is no insurance requirement.

The Illinois Pesticide Act has separate sections for Commercial Applicators and Commercial Not-for-Hire Applicators. Financial responsibility is only mentioned within the Commercial Applicator section of the law. MGs applying pesticides to a community garden would fall under Commercial Not-for-Hire, and are not required to have insurance. IDA has the following published on their website:

Financial Responsibility Demonstration

A licensed **commercial applicator** must provide to the Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture at the time of original licensing and license renewal evidence of financial responsibility protecting persons who may suffer personal injury or property damage or both as a result of the pesticide operation of the applicant in the form of a

surety bond or a certificate of liability insurance. Specific requirements can be found at *415 ILCS 60/10, paragraph 3*. Surety Bonds or Certificates of Insurance must be provided at the time of licensing and/or upon expiration of the current instrument. Please be advised that it is the licensee's and/or the company's responsibility to provide this surety bond or certificate of insurance to the Department prior to the expiration of the instrument.

A certificate of insurance submitted to meet the financial responsibility demonstration requirement must contain the following:

1. A 30-day cancellation notification in the event the insurance company should cancel the policy;
2. Coverage of not less than \$50,000 per person, \$100,000 per occurrence bodily injury liability coverage, with an annual aggregate of not less than \$500,000, and \$50,000 per occurrence property damage liability, with an annual aggregate of not less than \$50,000; or in lieu thereof, a combined single limit of not less than \$100,000 bodily injury and property damage liability combined, with an annual aggregate of not less than \$500,000; and
3. Each company location that is to be covered by the policy must be listed on the policy.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Department's licensing section at [217/785-2427](tel:2177852427). You can also fax us at 217/524-4882, or e-mail us at AGR.pesticide@illinois.gov.

Commercial Applicator - required for individuals who purchase, use or supervise the use of pesticides classified for General or Restricted Use for hire.

Commercial Not-for-Hire Applicator - required for individuals who purchase, use or supervise the use of pesticides classified for general or restricted use for any purpose on property of an employer when such activity is a requirement of the terms of employment and such application of pesticides under this certification is limited to property under the control of the employer only and includes, but is not limited to, the use or supervision of the use of pesticides in a greenhouse setting. "Commercial Not For Hire Applicator" also includes a certified applicator who uses or supervises the use of pesticides classified for general or restricted use as an employee of a state agency, municipality, or other duly constituted governmental agency

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