

# Licensing of Public Health Pest Control Applicators in Florida<sup>1</sup>

---

Frederick M. Fishel<sup>2</sup>

*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 Mosquito Control Section within the Bureau of Entomology and Pest Control.

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



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

working under the supervision of a licensed applicator (Figure 1).

## 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.

---

1. This document is PI169, one of a series of the Agronomy Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date, January 2009. Visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.  
2. Frederick M. Fishel, associate professor, Agronomy Department, and director, Pesticide Information Office; Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

- Aquatic plant control and control of all aquatic pests -- except mosquito larvae -- is regulated by the Bureau of Compliance Monitoring.

Application of products to control aquatic plants and aquatic pests may require a 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>.

## 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 Compliance Monitoring according to Chapter 487, F.S.

**Advanced PHPC Certification.** Individuals with advanced training in public-health pest control may elect to obtain an advanced certification for public-health pest control. This designation provides the individual with a certificate suitable for display in an office and an emblem to be displayed on the uniform. This exam cannot be taken more than once within any four-month period. Although this certification is not required for application of public-health pesticides, the certification demonstrates competency in the field of public-health pest control.

**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>.

**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.



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

## 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://www.ifasbooks.ufl.edu/merchant2/> – as well as from the FDACS Bureau of Entomology and Pest Control – 850-922-7011 or online at <http://www.flaes.org/aes-ent/index.html> – 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 Bureau of Entomology and Pest Control sponsors training programs to prepare applicators for the PHPC and Advanced PHPC exams. 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) and Aerial exams are administered by most of the UF/IFAS County Cooperative Extension Offices throughout the state. To find the Extension office nearest you, consult the following Web page: <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/map/>. Contact the local office to discuss scheduling arrangements. The other exams are arranged through the FDACS Bureau of Entomology and Pest Control, <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/onestop/aes/pestcont.html>.

### **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 advanced PHPC certification is valid as long as the PHPC license is valid. 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 Compliance Monitoring. 3125 Conner Drive, Bldg. 8, L-29, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1650, Phone: 850-488-3314, <http://www.flaes.org/complimonitoring/index.html> (viewed May, 2008).

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Bureau of Entomology and Pest Control Pesticide (Mosquito Control Section), 1203 Governors Square Blvd. (Suite 300), Tallahassee, FL 32301, Phone: 850-922-7011, <http://www.flaes.org/aes-ent/mosquito/index.html> (viewed May, 2008).

University of Florida/IFAS Pesticide Information Office, P.O. Box 110710, Bldg. 164, Gainesville, FL 32611-0710, Phone: 352-392-4721, <http://pested.ifas.ufl.edu/> (viewed May, 2008).

Fishel, F.M. 2005. Requirements of Aerial Applicators in Florida, EDIS Publication PI-58, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PI094> (viewed May, 2008). Department of Agronomy, IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville.

**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 Entomology & Pest Control
Advanced Public Health	Advanced Public Health	Public Health Manual  Chapter 388 F.S. – Mosquito Control  Chapter 5E-13 FAC – Rules of FDACS Mosquito Control Program Admin.	Bureau of Entomology & Pest Control
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 Entomology & Pest Control
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.	Bureau of Entomology & Pest Control
		Florida Mosquito Control Handbook	Florida Mosquito Control Association