



TECHNICAL NOTE #1

Who Can Apply Pesticides in PA State Parks?

Safe and effective pesticide application is a critical function in maintaining the public health and resource integrity of State Parks. This document outlines who can apply pesticides and who can supervise application.

Definitions

Applicator - any person physically applying pesticide, or directly supervising an application.

Autonomous Application - when an applicator is self-supervised.

Business - any entity, public or private, for-profit or non-profit, engaged in pesticide application. For State or Federal entities, regions or districts will be considered separate businesses. To employ a pesticide applicator, a business must obtain a Pesticide Business License ('BU' number). In the State Park system, each Region, as well as Central Office, has its own business license.

Category – pesticide application is differentiated by the treatment site and types of pests. Category 23, "Park or School Pest Control" is quite broad and allows pesticide application in campground and recreation areas against a range of pests, with few limitations. An exception is the treatment of swimming pool water, which can only be done with a Category 24 (Swimming Pools) license.

Direct Supervision - the Certified Applicator is within sight, or in contact by voice if line of sight is obscured.

Training - the review of the specific use of, and hazards attributed to a pesticide product, or the specific use of application equipment. Additionally, training addresses fundamental, or 'core' topics such as pesticide handling, mixing, equipment calibration, risk reduction, biological activity, and environmental fate. For Registered Technicians, being supervised in an application type not previously studied can serve as training, allowing subsequent autonomous application. Training records for Registered Technicians need to be retained for three years.

Applicator Categories

There are three categories of applicators - Certified Applicator, Registered Technician, or Non-credentialed Applicator. Applicator types are distinguished by when they can work autonomously, and whom they can supervise. The capabilities and training requirements for applicator types are summarized in Table 1.

Non-credentialed Applicator: as long as someone can follow directions, operate the equipment, and treat the correct species, they can serve in this capacity provided you have a Certified Applicator provide direct supervision.

Registered Technician: with this credential the applicator can work autonomously after completing a 13-point training that includes core topics such as human and environmental risk reduction, and the specifics of pesticide application. An effective training can be operational, completed in one day, and conducted by park staff. A Certified Applicator with one year of experience in the application category relevant to the training provided to the Technician candidates can conduct or verify the training. The annual fee for Registered Technician is \$20

Certified Applicator: the upgrade in capability from Technician to Applicator provides an employee that not only can work autonomously, but also supervise and train other applicators. The certification examinations are thorough, but manageable. Most candidates find that one to two days of preparation suffice, assuming they already have a basic understanding of biological systems. Currently, the Core exam is closed-book, while the Parks and Schools Category exam is open-book. The exams are typically administered at PA Department of Agriculture regional or Penn State Extension offices and can be scheduled online at the 'PaPlants' website (<https://www.paplants.pa.gov>).

Table 1. The different levels of applicator credentials are compared in terms of capabilities and training requirements.

	Non-credentialed Applicator	Registered Technician	Certified Applicator
Autonomous Application	No. Only under Direct Supervision by Certified Applicator	Yes, if trained in that application type.	Yes
Supervise Less-credentialed applicators	No	No	Yes
Credential Requirements	Not applicable	Annual training with documentation	Pass examination; accumulate recertification requirements
Credential Period	Not applicable	Ends last day of February, each year	Three years; license can be renewed if recertification credits accumulated
Credential Fee	Not applicable	\$20/year	\$35/year Commercial; \$35/three years Public

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