



SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN



PESTICIDES & HERBICIDES BEST PRACTICES

Herbicides and pesticides, including popular brands like “Roundup”, are commonly used for weed and pest control. While effective, these chemicals pose significant health and environmental risks if not handled properly. This bulletin provides essential information on the hazards, control measures, and regulatory requirements for safely working with these substances.

Hazards

- **Health Risks**
 - **Skin and Eye Irritation:** Direct contact can cause irritation or burns.
 - **Respiratory Issues:** Inhalation of fumes or dust can lead to respiratory problems.
 - **Long-term Effects:** Prolonged exposure may increase the risk of certain cancers and neurological disorders.
- **Environmental Impact**
 - **Water Contamination:** Runoff can contaminate water sources, affecting aquatic life.
 - **Soil Degradation:** Overuse can lead to soil health deterioration.

Control Measures

Always review the manufacturer provided Safety Data Sheet (SDS) before using any hazardous chemicals. Consult the SDS to determine requirements for Personal Protective Equipment, Safe Handling Practices, and Spill and Disposal Procedures.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
 - **Gloves:** Wear chemical-resistant gloves to prevent skin contact.
 - **Goggles:** Use safety goggles to protect your eyes from splashes.
 - **Respirators:** Use appropriate respiratory protection to avoid inhaling fumes or dust. Your employer must have a respiratory protection written program, provide annual training and fit-testing and medical clearance must be provided by a licensed health care professional, prior to donning certain types of respirators.
- **Safe Handling Practices**
 - **Read Labels:** Always read and follow the manufacturer’s instructions and safety warnings.
 - **Mixing and Application:** Mix chemicals in well-ventilated areas and apply them according to the recommended guidelines.
 - **Storage:** Store chemicals in their original containers, away from food and out of reach of children and pets.
- **Spill and Disposal Procedures**
 - **Spill Management:** Clean up spills immediately using absorbent materials and dispose of them properly.
 - **Disposal:** Follow local regulations for disposing of unused chemicals and empty containers.

Regulatory Requirements

- **EPA Regulations**
 - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates the use of herbicides and pesticides to ensure they do not pose unreasonable risks to human health or the environment. Always use EPA-approved products and follow their guidelines.
- **Worker Protection Standard (WPS)**
 - The WPS is a federal regulation designed to protect agricultural workers from pesticide exposure. It includes requirements for training, notification, PPE, and emergency assistance.
- **State and Local Regulations: New Jersey Pesticide Applicator License Requirements**
 - In New Jersey, you must have a pesticide applicator license to apply “Roundup” or similar over-the-counter products. A Commercial Applicator is defined as any person who applies pesticides for non-agricultural purposes and any person who uses or supervises the use, of pesticides on a "for hire" basis. **Or, any person that applies pesticides as part of their job with any governmental agency.** Examples of commercial applicators are those who work for exterminators; landscapers; tree services; aerial applicators; weed control firms; pet groomers; apartments, motels, nursing homes, restaurants, etc., and anyone who does their own pest control work; and **governmental agencies such as Mosquito Extermination Commissions, Public Schools, Departments of Public Works, Departments of Health, Department of Transportation, etc.**
 - **Commercial Applicator Certification:** Certification is accomplished by passing the pesticide applicator certification exams. Everyone must pass the basic ["Core" certification exam](#). This exam is based on the Pesticide Applicator Training Manual - Core. To be eligible to take the Core exam, the applicant shall submit proof of completion of a department-approved [Basic Pesticide Training Course](#). For more information about the requirements before taking the exam you can visit this website: [Steps to Take Before Taking Pesticide Applicator Exam](#).

The department-approved basic pesticide training course shall provide a working knowledge of the following: proper use of application equipment, potential hazards involved in applying pesticides, instructions for the mixing of pesticides, protective clothing and equipment, applicable State and Federal pesticide laws and regulations, interpretation of pesticide labels, and understanding integrated pest management. Proof of course completion must be uploaded to the PACER system at pacer.rutgers.edu when applying to take the Core exam.

In addition to the Core exam, one or more "Category" certification exams must be passed. The Category exams needed depend on the type of pest control that will be done. Applicants need 40 hours of on-the-job training under a licensed applicator before taking the category exam. Additionally, Commercial applicators must earn 8 core credits and 16 category-specific credits every 5 years to maintain their certification.

By understanding the hazards and following proper control measures and regulatory requirements, you can safely use herbicides and pesticides in your workplace. Always prioritize safety to protect yourself, others, and the environment.

For more information, visit the [NJDEP website](#).

[4: NJDEP-Compliance and Enforcement - Commercial Pesticide Applicator](#) [3: NJDEP-Compliance and Enforcement - Bureau of Licensing & Pesticide Operations](#) [2: How Do I Get A Pesticide Applicator License in New Jersey?](#)