

Becoming a Professional Pesticide Applicator in Georgia

This document is based on information from the Georgia Department of Agriculture, the University of Georgia, the UGA Cooperative Extension Service, and practicing Georgia pesticide applicators. It is an overview oriented toward individuals who are interested in treating hemlock trees. The primary web sites for the information presented here are:

- <http://agr.georgia.gov/pesticides.aspx>
- <http://agr.georgia.gov/1pesticide-applicator-licensing-and-certification.aspx>
- http://agr.georgia.gov/Data/Sites/1/media/ag_plantindustry/pesticides/files/licensecategories.pdf
- <http://www.gapestexam.com>
- <https://www.gapestexam.co/ExamInfo.cfm>
- <https://www.gapestexam.com/Forms/TrainingMaterials.pdf>
- <https://www.gapestexam.com/TestingCenters.cfm>
- <https://www.gapestexam.com/Registration/Registration.cfm?c=3>
- http://www.agr.georgia.gov/data/sites/1/media/ag_plantindustry/pesticides/files/newcontractorlicenseapplicationtotalpackagerevised1012.pdf
- <http://agr.georgia.gov/1pesticide-applicator-licensing-and-certification.aspx>

Also please visit our web site www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org.

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Licensing Requirements

An individual must obtain the appropriate type of pesticide applicator license in order to purchase, use, or supervise the use of a restricted use pesticide, or any general use or restricted use pesticide when providing pesticide applications for a fee. The kind of license(s) required depends on the type of pesticide you need to use and the manner in which you use it.

- To purchase, use, or supervise the use of any general use pesticide on your own property, you don't need a license.
- To purchase, use, or supervise the use of any general use pesticide on another person's property as a volunteer (without a fee), you don't need a license.
- To purchase, use, or supervise the use of any restricted use pesticide on your own property or the property of your employer while engaged in the production of an agricultural commodity, you need a Private Applicator License.
- To purchase, use, or supervise the use of any restricted use pesticide on your property or the property of your employer when *not* engaged in the production of an agricultural commodity, you need a Commercial Applicator License.
- In order to provide pesticide application of any type of pesticide, whether general use or restricted use, to the property of another person, and collect a fee for these services, you need both a Commercial Applicator License and a Pesticide Contractor License.

Obtaining a Private Pesticide Applicator License

The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service provides the training exercise necessary to obtain a Private Applicator License. You may arrange for this training by contacting the Cooperative Extension Service Agent in your county.

After you participate in the training session, your Extension Agent will send the necessary documentation to the Georgia Department of Agriculture Pesticide Division for processing, and your license will be printed and mailed to you within a few weeks. There is no fee to obtain a Private Pesticide Applicator License, and the license is valid for a period of five years.



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Training for a Commercial Pesticide Applicator License

In order to obtain a commercial applicator license, you do not need to first obtain a Private Applicator License. You must pass the commercial applicator examination provided by the Georgia Technical Colleges and pay a fee to the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Individuals who wish to obtain a commercial applicator license must pass the general standards examination as well as at least one major category examination. The general standards exam is designed to test for general knowledge on the use of pesticides, while the category exams are more specific to particular types of pesticide application. Here's the sequence of events.

1. Review the list of Commercial Applicator License Categories and choose the one(s) for which you want to be certified. See http://agr.georgia.gov/Data/Sites/1/media/ag_plantindustry/pesticides/files/licensecategories.pdf. The two major categories recommended for treating hemlocks are #23 Forest Pest Control and #24 Ornamental and Turf Pest Control.
2. Obtain the self-study training materials from the University of Georgia. You'll need materials for the general standards and those for the major categories you've chosen. Ordering information is located at <http://www.gapestexam.com>.
 - a. Upon entering the web site, register for an account if you don't already have one.
 - b. When you've completed the account registration, click on the [Exam Information](#) tab at the bottom of the page. On the Exam Information page, select [Training Materials](#).
 - c. The price for each unit of study materials is shown on the form and includes the cost of shipping via UPS. You may print and fill out the order form and mail it with a check or money order to the address listed on the form. Or you can call the Office of Communications at the phone number listed on the form, order your materials, and provide a credit card number to pay for them.
(Note that Forest Pest Control indicates it includes a CD, but the newest version of the materials does not.)
3. Complete this training on your own, using the appropriate study guides. Depending on the time you have available for studying, it may take 2-4 months to prepare for the exam.

Obtaining a Commercial Pesticide Applicator License

1. Once you've completed your training, the next step is taking the exam. You must pass the general standards exam as well as your chosen major category exam(s) with a score of 70% or better. To locate a testing center that is convenient for you, please see <https://www.gapestexam.com/TestingCenters.cfm>. For each center, there's a link you can click to see their testing schedule. Then register to take the exam either by calling the selected testing center or visiting <https://www.gapestexam.com/Registration/Registration.cfm?c=3> to complete an on-line registration.
2. To sit for the exam, you must present a State-issued drivers license or State-issued identification card. A \$45 exam fee will be charged by the Technical College at the time of testing. Most colleges accept checks, credit cards, or money orders.
3. The testing center will score your exams immediately and, if you have passed, will give you with the necessary paperwork indicating your scores. Then to get your license, mail a copy of the paperwork along with a check or money order for \$90 to the Georgia Department of Agriculture at the address shown on the form, and they will mail it to you. The license is valid for five years.

Obtaining a Contractor Pesticide Applicator License

A Contractor Pesticide Applicator License is required for any individual or company to engage in the business of contracting (i.e., charging a fee) for the application of any type of general use or restricted use pesticide to the land of another person in Georgia. Before you can get a Contractor License, you must first have a Commercial License and the required certification of financial responsibility.

1. "Certification of financial responsibility" basically means liability insurance. You can get this type of insurance through most insurance providers that offer commercial insurance, or you can contact the Georgia Insurance Commissioner's Office for a list of such companies. For information on the specific requirements, see http://www.agr.georgia.gov/data/sites/1/media/ag_plantindustry/pesticides/files/newcontractorlicenseapplicati_ontotalpackagerevised1012.pdf.

2. Once you've obtained the necessary insurance, complete the Georgia Pesticide Contractor License Application at http://agr.georgia.gov/Data/Sites/1/media/ag_plantindustry/pesticides/files/newcontractorlicenseapplicationtotalpackagerevised1012.pdf, and send it along with your proof of insurance and a \$55.00 application fee to the address indicated on the form.
3. Within a few weeks after you submit your proof on insurance and license application, you'll receive your Pesticide Contractor License in the mail, and the license is valid for one year.

Acquiring a Business License

If you don't already have a business license from the county in which your business is based, you must obtain one before beginning to do business. Contact your county government offices to determine the appropriate license or permit required and the particular office that issues it. Take your Pesticide Contractor License and proof of insurance with you. The annual fee for a business license is \$50 in most counties; some counties may pro-rate this fee during the second half of the year.

Equipment and Treatment Materials

The two chemicals recommended for treating HWA are products containing Imidacloprid and Dinotefuran. For a list of products, visit http://www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org/Chemical_Controls.htm. A partial list of sources for these products can be found on <http://www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org/Contacts.htm>.

The major equipment you'll need is one or more soil injectors (Kioritz if you can find one or Nu-Arbor if you can't), hand-pump or back-pack sprayer for small trees, and high-powered sled-style sprayer for large trees). You'll also need the required personal protective gear such as chemical-resistant gloves, goggles, and a mask or respirator.

Other tools and small items you may find useful include:

Work apron or tool belt	Hammer and rebar for making holes in soil for soil drench
Measuring tape and calculator (A forester's diameter tape is handy.)	Spray paint or tags for marking treated trees
Notebook, pen, and pocket calculator	Vice grip, wrench, screw driver, pliers, needle-nose nippers, and small gimlet for repairs and cleaning injector holes
1 or more wide-mouthed gallon jug for mixing chemicals	Large light-colored towel in case injector must be disassembled in the woods
Measuring cup with ounces and/or grams marked	Ziplock baggies to seal up leftover packets of powder
Bucket for clean water only	Trash bag for packaging and other refuse
Machete or loppers for removing unwanted lower branches	

Renewing a License

The Georgia Department of Agriculture requires that all private and commercial pesticide applicators be recertified every 5 years from the date of original certification. A contractor license must be renewed every year.

- To renew a Private Pesticide Applicator License, you can either participate in the private applicator training again or obtain 3 re-certification credit hours during the five-year period. There is no cost to renew this license.
- To renew a Commercial Pesticide Applicator License, you can either take the exam again for the categories in which you are certified or obtain 6 or 10 re-certification credit hours per licensed category during the five-year period. If you retake the exam, the cost is the exam fee plus the fee for renewal. If you obtain credit hours, the only cost is the fee for renewal.
- To renew a Contractor Pesticide Applicator License, you must have a current Commercial License, have current liability insurance, and pay the fee for renewal.

To search for upcoming approved re-certification courses in your licensed categories, please visit [Pesticide Applicator Re-certification Courses](#). All re-certification course approval requests should be submitted to the Georgia Department of Agriculture at least two weeks prior to the course date. Re-certification course approval requests can be mailed to the address below or faxed to (404) 657-8378.

All re-certification credit hours must be received in the Georgia Department of Agriculture Pesticide Division office at least 90 days prior to the expiration of your license. All licensees who obtain the required re-certification credit hours will be mailed a renewal notice approximately 90 days prior to license expiration. If you have questions regarding the re-certification course process, please contact Eric Olsen by e-mail at eric.olsen@agr.georgia.gov or Sandy Shell at sandy.shell@agr.georgia.gov or call 404-656-4958.

The mailing address for obtaining a commercial or contractor license, renewing a license, or approval and submission of re-certification credit hours is:

Georgia Department of Agriculture
 Pesticide Division
 19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Room 550
 Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone: (404)-656-4958

Cost Summary

The overall cost of acquiring and maintaining a pesticide license depends primarily on the kind of license you get.

- **Private Pesticide Applicator License** – There are no fees of any kind, only the cost of your equipment and chemicals. See below. Re-certification training is free through your County Extension Office.

- **Commercial Pesticide Applicator License** –

Study materials	\$55 made out to the County Extension Service (\$15 General Standards + \$15 Forest Pest Control + \$25 Ornamentals and Turf Pest Control)	one time
Exam	\$45 to GA Dept. of Agriculture	per attempt
Commercial license	\$90 to GA Dept. of Agriculture	initially & every 5 years
Business License	\$50-\$100 to county where business is based	per year
Equipment	\$600 approx (retail) (\$495 soil injector + \$85 back-pack sprayer, other tools/items)	one time
Chemicals	\$150 for generic Imidacloprid (retail) \$350-\$390 for Dinotefuran (retail)	per case per container

- **Contractor Pesticide Applicator License** – The same as for a Commercial Pesticide Applicator License *plus*:

Contractor's license	\$55 to GA Dept. of Agriculture	initially & every year
Liability insurance	\$500-\$800 from insurer of your choice	per year