

# Pesticide Licenses and Certifications: Who Needs Them?

Florida has several laws (Florida Statutes - F.S.) that govern the pesticide industry. **Chapter 482 F.S.** is the relevant law for structural pest control in, on, around, and under houses and other structures. **Chapter 487 F.S.** is the law relevant to agriculture settings. **Chapter 388 F.S.** addresses mosquito control and other public nuisance pests. Each statute identifies different requirements and expectations for the pesticide applicators that the law is designed to regulate. Homeowners, while exempt from needing a license, are still required to read and follow the pesticide label for the home-labeled products they use at home.

Determining which license or certification you need depends on where you will be making the applications, your employer, and which pesticides you will be using. You could possibly be required to have more than one license and/or certification.

## **What does Chapter 482 F.S. (also known as the Structural Pest Control Act) cover?**

Any pesticide application made around residential structures or non-agricultural work settings such as commercial landscaping, commercial fertilizer application, or government or private non-agricultural properties requires the applicator to either be certified or be under the supervision of a certified pest control operator.

The Structural Pest Control Act regulates several certifications: Pest Control Operator Certification (**PCO**); Limited Certification Governmental or Private for either Lawn and Ornamental (**L L&O**) or for Limited Structural (**LS**); Limited Certification Commercial Landscape Maintenance (**LCLM**); Limited Urban Landscape Commercial Fertilizer Application (**LF**); and Limited Commercial Wildlife Management Certification (**LW**). Each of these certifications has limitations. Application of any general use and/or restricted use pesticide, with very few exceptions, requires a certification.

### **Florida Pesticide Laws**

- The Structural Pest Control Act - Chapter 482 F.S.
- The Florida Pesticide Law - Chapter 487 F.S.
- Mosquito Control - Chapter 388 F.S.



Photo credit: Bill Schall

**PCO** – applicators doing contractual work and must be certified in the category or scope of work they do or supervise in these areas: fumigation, general household pest control, lawn and ornamental pest control, and termites and other wood-destroying organisms pest control. A PCO can supervise applicators under his/her authority. These employees are considered ‘non-certified employees’ and must have an

employee identification card. The card is only valid while working with the company that requested the card.

**L&O** – applicators performing lawn and ornamental work only for the governmental entity or private business for whom they work. Each applicator must be licensed. The application of **disinfectants, sanitizers, or ready-to-use** pesticides sold over the counter at retail is exempt from needing a certification.

**LS** – applicators performing pest control to buildings only for the governmental or private business for whom they work. These applications are in, on, or around structures. Each applicator must be certified. The application of **disinfectants, sanitizers, or ready-to-use** pesticides sold over the counter at retail may be applied without a certification.

**LCLM** – are contract landscapers and may only apply pesticides to ornamentals and plant beds, along with edging yards and sidewalks. Each applicator must be certified.

**LF** – are contract applicators of any fertilizer to non-agricultural areas. No pesticide applications are covered by this certification. Each applicator must be licensed in most circumstances.

**LW** – are trappers performing nonchemical contractual pest control, such as trapping or exclusion, dealing with the mice and rats in, on, or under structures. Each trapper must be licensed.

PCOs may supervise applicators under their control.

All other limited certifications require each applicator to be certified.

## What does Chapter 487 F.S. (also known as the Florida Pesticide Law) cover?

If you are engaged in the production of an agricultural commodity (including sod, nursery plants, or doing commercial work for a grower), you are regulated by Chapter 487. If you work in aquatic, natural areas, certain ornamental and turf sites, including golf courses, parks, athletic fields, or cemeteries, right-of-way, forestry, or sewers, you also are governed under Chapter 487 F.S. There are 3 licenses available through the Florida Pesticide Law: Private, Public, and Commercial.



**All restricted use pesticides (RUP), must be purchased by and used under the direct supervision of a licensed applicator.** A licensed applicator may supervise up to 15 unlicensed people.

**Private** – for applicators that apply pesticides on their own private property, or their employer’s property for agricultural production.

**Public** – for applicators employed by a government entity that apply pesticides as part of his/her job in agricultural related areas.

**Commercial** – for applicators doing contractual work in agricultural related pest control.

Public and Commercial applicators must be licensed in the category for each area of intended use. Categories include areas such as:

- Aerial application
- Agricultural row crop pest control
- Aquatic pest control
- Natural areas weed management
- Ornamental & turf pest control
- Right-of-way pest control

Private, Public, and commercial applicators may supervise up to 15 unlicensed applicators.

Chapter 487 F.S.

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2012/Chapter487/All>



Photo by Stephen Ausmus USDA # D2623-8



Photo by Seth Britch USDA # D2644-1

### **What does Chapter 388 F.S. Public Health Pest Control cover?**

Chapter 388 F.S. governs mosquito control, or public health pest control, in the state. Anyone, other than homeowners, who use either restricted use or general use pesticides to control mosquitoes or other arthropods must be licensed. Arthropods are defined in Chapter 388 F.S. as “those insects of public health or nuisance importance, including all mosquitoes, midges, sand flies, dog flies, yellow flies, and house flies”.

#### **Chapter 388 F.S.**

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2012/Chapter388/All>

**Palm Beach County Cooperative Extension Service  
559 N. Military Trail, West Palm Beach, FL 33415**

*For more information on pesticides, training calendars, and exams, contact:*

**Frank Dowdle  
Agricultural Safety Agent  
fdowdle@ufl.edu**

<http://www.pbcgov.com/coextension/agriculture/safety/>

Homeowners are exempt from certification. Federal law requires that they read and follow all pesticide label directions. Homeowners should never use a pesticide in or around their home that is not labeled for home use.