

Update on EPA's Certification of Pesticide Applicators Regulation PPDC Meeting, May 3, 2017, Session 4b

On January 4, 2017 EPA issued a final rule with revisions to the 1974 regulation that establishes requirements for the certification of applicators of restricted use pesticides. The final rule includes many revisions from the proposed rule in response to comments and added alternatives that are flexible to account for the protections and approaches that many state certification programs have in place. The goal of the rule is to ensure the federal certification standards adequately protect applicators, the public and the environment from potential risks associated with use of restricted use pesticides.

EPA believes the final changes to the rule will improve the competency of certified applicators by establishing:

- new standards for certification (such as minimum age and exam standards),
- more specific requirements for evaluating competency of private applicators,
- minimum requirements for recertification programs, and
- new certification categories to address specific complex application methods.

The final changes will increase protection for noncertified applicators of restricted use pesticides operating under the direct supervision of a certified applicator:

- through enhanced pesticide safety training or other qualifications and standards for supervision of noncertified applicators, and
- by establishing a minimum age requirement for such noncertified applicators.

In keeping with EPA's commitment to work more closely with tribal governments to strengthen environmental protection in Indian Country, EPA also made changes that will provide more practical options for establishing certification programs in Indian Country.

The final rule includes a flexible implementation time frame. Certifying agencies will have three years to submit a revised certification plan demonstrating their compliance with the new requirements. If a certifying agency meets this deadline, their existing plan stays in effect until EPA approves or rejects the revised plan. EPA will work with certifying agencies to establish a timeframe for full implementation of their revised certification plans.

As of early May 2017, the final certification rule has not gone into effect. The original effective date was March 6, 2017 but has been extended until May 22, 2017 to allow for review of the rule for questions of fact, law and policy.

More information on pesticide applicator certification is available on our website:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/revised-certification-standards-pesticide-applicators>.