

PEST CONTROL NEWSLETTER

Number 23

March 2008

This newsletter informs licensed pest control operators (PCOs) about events that impact on their industry.

It is published by the Pest Control Program of the Department of Human Services (the department).

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- Possum control legislation
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PESTICIDES AND DRINKING WATER TANKS

PCOs should take additional precautions when spraying a property that has a rainwater tank connected to the roof to prevent overspray onto guttering and the roof area.

If there is any risk of pesticide residue washing into the tank, particularly if the tank is to be used for drinking water, clients should be informed of the risks and advised to take additional precautions.

The first rainfall after a dry period usually collects most of the contaminants on a roof. Some people may have a 'first flush' or other diversion system installed, which prevents this water from entering the water tank. If people don't have this system, and a risk exists, they should be advised to divert the collection pipe away from the rainwater tank and wait until after the next rainfall before reconnecting the drinking water tank to the roof.

PCOs are reminded that it is an offence to use or permit any other person to use pesticides for commercial gain in Victoria without an appropriate licence. Persons may be liable to be prosecuted under section 108C of the *Health Act 1958* if this requirement is breached.

THE DROUGHT AND PEST CONTROL

Generally, during periods of restriction, water from the tap is permitted to be used for legitimate business purposes. For PCOs this includes mixing chemicals and washing PPE.

Where Stage 1-3 water restrictions apply, vehicles can be washed with a handheld hose. In accordance with standard practice, PCOs should wash their vehicles so that excess wash water does not run off into stormwater drains. This can be achieved by washing vehicles on grassy areas so cleaning agents and pesticide residues are absorbed into the soil.

Where Stage 3a water restrictions apply, vehicles can only be washed at a commercial car wash facility that uses 70 litres or less per car. PCOs should first check with the proprietor of the car wash for their policy on commercial vehicles, that waste water is directed to sewerage and any recycled water is filtered and decontaminated before being used again to reduce the risk of pesticide residue contamination.

In the case of Stage 4 restrictions, vehicles can only be washed for health and safety reasons, such as to remove pesticide residue.

Furthermore, commercial car washes should only be used for the purpose of maintaining the general appearance of the vehicle. The clean up of large chemical spills should be dealt with immediately according to the recommended procedure. Refer to Technical note number 4 – Managing spills and pesticide disposal for further information.

PCOs should check with the local water authority for information regarding the water restrictions that apply in the area in which they are working.

CURRENT LICENCE FEES

Licence fees increased on 1 July 2007. The current licence fees are:

- technician licence \$498.10 (three-year licence)
- trainee licence \$165.30 (one-year licence)
- interstate operator licence \$54.00 (three-year licence)

NEW NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SAFE USE OF PESTICIDES

The *Guidelines for the safe use of pesticides in non-agricultural workplaces* were developed by the Pest Management Industry and Government Sector Advisory Group, which consists of representatives from the pest management industry and state government licensing agencies.

They were developed as a guide for people working in pest management and related industries and offer practical and informative guidance on how to comply with legislation relating to the use, transport, storage and disposal of pesticides.

The guidelines have been produced as a web based document to enable regular review. Any suggestions and comments would be welcomed and should be directed to the Victorian Pest Control Program.

The *Guidelines for the safe use of pesticides in non-agricultural workplaces* are available on the pest control licensing website.

POSSUM CONTROL

The *Wildlife Act 1975* and the Wildlife Regulations 2002 were established in order to protect wildlife throughout Victoria. PCOs who wish to control possums must hold a Commercial Wildlife (Wildlife Controller) Licence, issued by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), and comply with the conditions of that licence.

Under the Wildlife Act it is an offence to take, destroy, release or control possums without a Wildlife Controller Licence.

Furthermore, PCOs should **not** use rodenticide baits in roofs where there is evidence of possum activity. A Wildlife Controller must first exclude the possum and prevent return before the rodents can be controlled. If there is any chance that the possum will return, suitable bait stations that prevent wildlife accessing the rodent bait should be employed.

For more information, contact DSE on 136 186.

OHS REPORT – NEW REGULATIONS

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 came into force on 1 July 2007. They have replaced previous regulations including those specifically relating to hazardous substances and falls.

Whilst the fundamental principles in the Regulations regarding risk control and duty to protect health and safety remain essentially the same, certain duties have altered slightly.

More information can be found on the WorkSafe website at www.workcover.vic.gov.au

TIM AND STEVE AND THE TSD

In the last issue of our newsletter, we met Steve, a PCO who has had his own business for four years, and Tim, who had just been employed by Steve as a trainee.

Tim has now been working for Steve for 4 months. We met with them recently to see how everything was working out.

"Tim's been doing really well" says Steve, "and business is starting to pick up now that it's warmer, so I'd like to start sending him out on his own".

Steve explains that Tim applied for, and was granted his trainee licence a couple of months ago, and immediately started accompanying Steve on jobs. He also enrolled in the general pest control course at NMIT.

"Initially Tim was just observing me on the job then gradually started helping me out more and more as his knowledge grew. In the last month or so I've had Tim doing most of the work and I've just been there to help and advise him as he goes about the job." says Steve.

Steve was already aware from the trainee conditions of licence that Tim had to be directly supervised until he could apply pesticides to control pests without risking his own health, the health of any other person or the environment.

Steve called the department to find out about the requirements of the *Trainee skills declaration* (TSD) form. We advised Steve that he can download TSD forms from the pest control licensing website and that he should fill one in for every pest he thinks Tim is competent to treat independently.

We also explained that Steve should accompany Tim on four jobs for the treatment of a particular pest (for rodents, for example), observe him from beginning to end, and assess him against the criteria on the TSD form. Once Steve is satisfied that Tim has the skills and knowledge to competently complete those four jobs he should sign the form and fax it to the department.

Two weeks later we receive four TSD forms for Tim for ants, spiders, fleas and rodents.

Steve calls the department to check that we received them. "So this means Tim can go out on his own now for any jobs treating those pests, right?" he asks.

We confirm that this is correct, provided Tim can contact Steve if he has any questions or problems.

Join Tim and Steve next issue as they tackle the summer rush.

**Names have been changed*

NEW RODENT SPECIES DISCOVERED

A new species of rodent has been discovered - for sale on a food stall in a market in the Khammouan region of Laos. The rock rat - or kha-nyou - is unlike any rodent seen before by scientists, and spotted by conservation biologist Robert Timmins – on a table next to some vegetables. Locals prepare the rodent for eating by roasting it on a skewer. It looks something like a cross between a large dark rat and a squirrel.

ENQUIRIES

Please direct enquiries regarding information contained in this newsletter to:

Department of Human Services
Pest Control Program
GPO Box 4057
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Phone: 1300 887 090

Fax: 1300 881 765

Email: pestcontrol@dhs.vic.gov.au

Website: www.health.vic.gov.au/pestcontrol

FAQS – LICENCE RENEWAL

Q – I looked at my licence card and noticed it expires in a few months. What should I do?

A – A renewal notice will be mailed to you approximately 1-2 months before your licence expires. Once received, you should check that the personal and business details specified are correct and return the renewal notice to the department with a cheque for the fee indicated.

Q – Do I have to update the photo on my licence?

A – If you are satisfied with the photo that is on your current licence, you do not need to update your photo upon renewal. However, if you have changed significantly, *Photo identification* forms are available from the pest control licensing website. This should be completed and sent to the department with your new photo.

Q – The fee for my licence renewal is very expensive. Can I pay in instalments?

A – No, the department does not accept payment in instalments.

PEST CONTROL LICENSING WEBSITE

Information about pest control licensing is available online at:

www.health.vic.gov.au/pestcontrol

This includes:

- the *Guidelines for pest control licensing*
- the *Guidelines for the safe use of pesticides in non-agricultural workplaces*
- licence application forms
- *Trainee skills declaration* forms
- *Change of contact details* forms
- technical notes and newsletters.

SUBMISSIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

The department will consider articles submitted for inclusion in this newsletter. These must be of a non-commercial nature and limited to 150 words in length.

The information and views expressed in such articles represent those of the author and do not in any way reflect the views of the department.

The department reserves the right of refusal and the right to edit articles submitted.



PEST CONTROL COURSE NOW ONLINE FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

The flexible delivery course has been upgraded to an online course allowing all reports, exercises and minor tests to be done via the internet. Another bonus is the student will be able to have feedback from the lecturer at a set time each week.

The students will still be expected to attend a set number of days at the College during the year for practical classes and tests.

Melbourne metropolitan based companies will be expected to send their trainees to the Fairfield campus on Tuesday nights 6-9pm for the licence units and Tuesday and Thursday nights for Certificate III in Asset Maintenance (Pest Management – Technical) 6-9pm.

Cost: Tuesday nights \$401.25

Tuesday and Thursday nights \$787.50

For more information contact Lex Hodge on 03 9269 8843.