

PEST CONTROL NEWSLETTER

Number 22

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

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

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ARE YOUR MSDSs AND LABELS CURRENT?

Every pesticide in Australia is required to be registered for use with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. A requirement of the registration process is that the pesticide has an approved label and Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

Manufacturers of pesticides regularly review labels and MSDSs and may issue new versions as more information becomes available, such as evidence of adverse health effects.

PCOs should ensure that they check the label of every pesticide they purchase for any variation in information, particularly in regards to application rate or withholding period. Additionally, PCOs should ensure that the MSDS for each pesticide they carry is no more than

five years old and regularly check for the latest versions.

New labels and MSDSs are available from chemical suppliers.

Pesticides that have recently updated labels or MSDSs include:

- **Racumin 8**
- **Imperator Smoke Generator**
- **Premise Termiticide.**

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.

EMPLOYERS – HAVE YOU CHECKED THAT YOUR EMPLOYEES HAVE CURRENT LICENCES?

It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that any person they employ to use pesticides in the business of pest control holds a valid Licence to use pesticides.

Employers should regularly check the licence status of their employees. It is not sufficient to simply ask a person whether or not they are licensed. The photo ID card should be sighted and the details recorded.

Employers are liable to be prosecuted if they allow unlicensed employees to apply pesticides in the business of pest control. This includes trainees employed by the business.

NEW LICENCE FEES FOR 2007-2008

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).

ARE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS CORRECT?

Please ensure that you inform the department within ten working days if any of your personal or business details change – including the name of your employer or business. Otherwise you risk licence cancellation as a result of not receiving renewal notices and may miss out on important information and updates.

Change of contact details forms are available on the pest control licensing website or by contacting the department.

Trainee and Supervisor Special

SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS NOTIFICATION

Trainee licences are granted subject to certain conditions, which are issued with the licence. Trainee licence holders and their supervisors should familiarise themselves with these as it is an offence to breach a condition of licence.

One such condition specifies that trainees inform the department promptly of any changes to their supervision arrangements. Supervisors should also inform the department if there are any changes to the trainees under their supervision.

For more information about conditions of the trainee licence or to obtain a *Change of contact details* form, visit the pest control licensing website or contact the department.

TRAINING LOGBOOK

Trainees are required to maintain a record, or logbook, of all training undertaken on the job. The following details are required to be included in the training logbook:

- pest identification
- pest habits/locations
- chemical selection
- label interpretation
- selection of personal protective equipment
- selection and maintenance of equipment
- chemical application
- safe handling of equipment and chemicals
- procedures for handling chemical spills
- industry best practice
- interpretation of Material Safety Data Sheets
- debriefing sessions.

The training logbook should include information that will allow individual pest control jobs that have been attended by the trainee to be matched with the business records for that job (for example job number or date and site address).

Authorised officers of the department may request to see the training logbook and corresponding records during the course of an inspection.

NEW TRAINEES – DIRECT SUPERVISION

PCOs considering taking on a trainee must be aware of their responsibilities as a supervisor before doing so.

Trainees **must not** use pesticides until they have applied for **and been granted** a trainee Licence to use pesticides by the department. Trainees will also need to enrol in a relevant pest control course, as outlined in the *Guidelines for pest control licensing in Victoria*.

A number of conditions are attached to the Trainee licence. It is an offence to breach a condition of licence. These conditions include supervision requirements.

The department recommends that trainees undertake a number of months of intensive training under the direct instruction of their supervisor. This means that the nominated supervisor or a delegate with a technician *Licence to use pesticides* is present at **every** job the trainee attends. During this period, trainees should develop the knowledge and skills to safely apply pesticides without their supervisor being present.

TRAINEES – INDIRECT SUPERVISION

Trainees **must not** apply pesticides without their supervisor being present until the department receives the appropriate *Trainee skills declaration* (TSD) form.

It is unrealistic to expect that a trainee will have the knowledge and skills to be assessed for the purpose of the TSD form on the first four occasions that they apply pesticides to control a particular pest.

Once the department has received a TSD form for **a pest**, the trainee is able to apply pesticides to control **that pest** under indirect supervision. This means that provided they can contact their supervisor by mobile telephone, for example, they can attend and complete jobs independently.

Blank TSD forms and a completed example are available for download from the pest control licensing website. Should you require further explanation or assistance, please contact the department.

For further information regarding direct and indirect supervision please refer to the *Guidelines for pest control licensing in Victoria*.

All pesticides are toxic.

Toxicity x exposure = risk

MEET TIM AND STEVE

Steve* is a pest control technician who has been working in the industry for 12 years. He has had his own business, Fly Away, for the last four. Tim* is a trainee who was employed by Steve in April this year.

When we first sat down with Steve, he told us about his concerns in taking on an employee: "The business has been going really well for the last few years," he said. "But last summer was just crazy. I was working long hours during the week and on the weekend. The business is at a point where I can't handle all the work myself."

"I've never been an employer before, but I was also concerned because I wanted to take on a trainee, and that would mean officially acting as a supervisor."

"It's a big responsibility to be liable not only for your own actions, but also another person, and that's basically what I'll be doing by taking on a trainee. It's important to me to do things by the book, because ultimately it's my business, livelihood and health on the line if anything goes wrong."

During his interview Tim found out there was much more to pest control than just getting a truck and spraying people's homes.

"I never realised I'd have to get a licence just to use pesticides and that I'd have to go back to school and do a course" Tim said. "It's good, though, because this is something that I can turn into a career rather than just a job."

Steve helped Tim fill out an application form for a trainee licence and enrolled him in the general pest control course at NMIT.

"I wasn't quite sure of all the info I had to put on the licence application form, but I rang the girls at the department and they talked me through it. Once I sent in the form it only took a week to get the licence in the mail and then Tim started coming out on site with me."

"I asked Tim whether he'd rather do a course by correspondence or actually attend class each week" Steve said. "He told me he wasn't very keen on learning out of a book and would rather be in a classroom with a teacher, so I called Lex at NMIT. He started the following week".

"I'll train him on the job over winter and he should be right to start going out on his own come spring."

Join Tim and Steve next issue as they tackle Trainee skills declaration forms.

**Names have been changed*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – PPE

Q – I wear blundstones when I apply pesticides. Is this adequate?

A – Whilst blundstones or similar boots are hardy and protect your foot from physical damage, such as falling objects, the leather is not impervious or chemically resistant. If you spill liquid pesticide on your boot, it will permeate the leather, potentially exposing your foot. Over time your foot could absorb significant amounts of pesticide. If you wear leather boots, they should be regularly treated with waterproofing product to ensure they remain impervious.

Q – Is it OK to wash my work coveralls and hat with the rest of the washing?

A – No. The purpose of coveralls and hats is to protect your head, neck and body from pesticide exposure. It is therefore highly likely that your coveralls and hat will have been contaminated by pesticide.

To prevent contamination of other non-work clothes, you should first rinse your coveralls and hat separately, and then wash them in hot soapy water either on their own or with other work coveralls and hats. If possible it is advisable to have a separate washing machine specifically for work clothes. The use of a heavy-duty detergent and fabric starch will help to decontaminate the clothing. Do not use bleach or ammonia as they are ineffective in removing residues and may produce toxic fumes when combined with the pesticide. Line drying in direct sunlight is advisable to further decontaminate the clothing.

Q – Can I wear latex gloves as PPE when doing rodent jobs?

A – Always read and follow the label and MSDS for the product you have chosen when selecting PPE. Depending on the toxicity, the form of the pesticide and the way in which the product will be applied, appropriate PPE will be specified. The PPE specified on the label and MSDS is the minimum recommended by the manufacturer. If you believe you require additional protection, you may choose to wear additional PPE.

Q – How often should I change the cartridges on my respirator?

A – Respirator cartridges should be replaced regularly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. **Do not** wait until you can taste or smell pesticide through the respirator before you change your filter cartridge.

If you use your respirator frequently and if it is often exposed to pesticide, the cartridges will degrade more quickly. Exposure to UV light and air will also cause the cartridges to degrade faster. When not in use, store your respirator in a sealed container to increase the life of your cartridges.

SNEAKY BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

Members of the parasitic insect order *Strepsiptera* parcel themselves up in a piece of their victim's skin to avoid detection.

The parasites feed on other insects and are spread when the host insects brush up against each other in nests or on plants. The parasite larvae burrow into the host and enclose themselves in the soft tissue lining the abdomen. From there they feed on and destroy the host's reproductive systems, rendering them sterile.

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*
- licence application forms
- *Trainee skills declaration* forms
- *Change of contact details* forms
- technical notes and newsletters.

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

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.

CHANGES TO VICTORIA'S 1080 BAIT SYSTEM

From 1 January 2008 bait users in Victoria will be able to purchase 1080 bait products from accredited or authorised retailers. This will replace the current system where bait users can only purchase 1080 bait products one hour per week from 58 Department of Primary Industries (DPI) locations around the State.

These changes are designed to make it easier for people to purchase 1080 bait products by reducing paperwork and enabling a greater range of bait types to become available to users while also making the manufacture, supply and use of 1080 bait safer.

In order to purchase 1080 pest animal baits under this new system, bait users are required to complete a 1080 training course and hold the appropriate licence or permit.

Training in the use of 1080 pest animal baits in this new regulatory environment is available to persons holding a Licence to Use Pesticides with an authorisation to use pesticides formulated for the control of any pest animal, issued by the Pest Control Program, Department of Human Services.

For more information regarding the changes to the 1080 system in Victoria, please visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au/1080 or call the 1080 bait Hotline on 1300 10 1080.