

Deadline approaches for 'spraying grandfathers'

Pesticides notebook
by Colin Palmer



If you, or your staff are over 50 and currently apply sprays for weeds or hylobius in your woodlands without a PA1 / PA6 certificate, then time is running out to become compliant with revised legislation.

26 November 2015 will be the last date for the purchase or use of pesticides for those who have no spraying certificate for the application of weedkillers or insecticides in forestry or elsewhere. This includes the use of knapsack sprayers or weedwipers for low-hazard herbicides such as glyphosate, but does not affect the use of amateur products in the garden. Some suppliers will ask to see your certificate before providing your purchases.

This follows EC legislation which was implemented by the UK in July 2012, and affects those born prior to December 1964 who currently buy and use sprays on their own land without qualification.

All those born after December 1964 will already be required to have certificates as are those who apply sprays as a contractor.

Courses for certificates

Certification in the UK is operated by City and Guilds through the NPTC certification scheme which qualifies all persons wishing to use professional products on their plantation. Training and certification is offered by agricultural colleges and a number of independent trainers and will cost around £400 for a two-day course to include the foundation certificate (PA1), the hand-held application module (PA6) and the exam fee. PA1 / PA2 / PA6 have now become 051 / 053 / 052 (see panel).

Courses for these certificates usually take one day per module, plus a separate attendance for the assessment.

However, a modified, simpler scheme is also offered specifically for experienced 'grandfathers', the Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Pesticides (award 021605) with content based on a workbook, setting out the required knowledge, which can be studied at the candidate's convenience. This will be followed up with oral questioning on overall principles of pesticide usage covering: legislative requirements for pesticides, interpreting product information, ensuring personal safety (incl. PPE), safeguarding the environment, storage, disposal and record keeping. Finally, a practical assessment of hand-held application and / or tractor / machine application as appropriate.

Any training is likely to take two days depending on the experience (and competence) of the delegate, and the assessment process will



take 2 - 3 hours.

Powerpoint presentations on these modules plus an order form for the workbook (£5.00) are available from: www.nptc.org.uk/qualificationschemesdetail.aspx?id=474

The training and certification is overseen by City and Guilds. In my (fortunately) infrequent dealings with City & Guilds / NPTC I have rarely been impressed by their customer service - so when researching this article I was not surprised to find myself increasingly irritated by the difficulty in finding key information, so I do not advise anyone short on patience trying to contact them.

So if you require this certification, then I suggest that the first step is to contact your local agricultural college to find what training and assessment facilities they are offering. There are also a number of independent trainers who may provide a more personalised service, but finding them may not be easy as there appears to be no national or regional register lists.

You may, of course, feel confident enough to be assessed without training, and if so, assessments have to be carried out by assessors working with NPTC accredited centres. A list of assessment centres can be found by entering your postcode in the appropriate box at: www.nptc.org.uk/qualificationcentresresults.aspx?ids=0216&idu=-1

So if this affects you, or your staff, do act swiftly as those last few months will soon fly by...

CONFOR | CHEMICAL ADVICE HELPLINE

Confor members may contact Colin Palmer for free advice and information on pesticides. Call 01531 633500 or email to forestry@branchline.demon.co.uk

THE CERTIFICATES

PA1 (051): foundation certificate

This is required by all users which covers aspects of the spraying operation which could affect legislation, operator safety, environmental safety and safety to the public and includes:

- Current legislation
- Person hygiene
- Preparing pesticides for use
- Transport and storage of pesticides
- Disposal techniques
- Record keeping
- Interpreting product labels and literature
- Selecting and using protective clothing
- Dealing with contamination
- Environmental safety

PA6 (052): hand-held equipment

Additional certificate required by all using hand-held equipment including knapsack sprayers, CDA sprayers, hand held mistblowers, weedwipers and granule application.

- General safety and routine maintenance of the sprayer
- Adjustment, setting and calibration
- Measuring and mixing pesticides
- Operating the hand-held sprayer
- Decontamination of the sprayer and protective sprayer

PA2 (053): mounted equipment

Additional certificate required by all using tractor or ATV-mounted equipment. This includes boom sprayers, and inter-row two or four wheeled shielded sprayers and includes:

- General safety and routine maintenance of the sprayer
- Pump types and maintenance
- Hitching the sprayer to the tractor
- After work cleaning and lubrication of the sprayer
- Preparation for work
- Field operation
- Checking and storing
- Setting and calibration.

