

Pesticide Safety eNewsletter

Department of Health

December 2023, Edition 3

OFFICIAL

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Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of the Pesticide Safety eNewsletter.

This edition contains important information about legislative changes affecting licence holders and pre-construction timber pest control.

The newsletter is published by the Pesticide Safety Team in the Public Health Division of the Department of Health.

Feel free to forward the eNewsletter to anyone interested.

To receive the eNewsletter directly, register on our website at [Subscribe | health.vic.gov.au](https://health.vic.gov.au) or provide your contact details to pesticidesafety@health.vic.gov.au.

Changes to licence authorisations for timber pest control

The Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 adopted nationally harmonised minimum training and licencing requirements. This included the addition of a timber pest authorisation with associated units of competency required. This change reflects the complexity and specialist knowledge required for pesticide applications for the control of timber pests.

Following the end of the transitional period (31/12/2021), all licences will now only be renewed or issued based on the harmonised minimum training requirements. See [Public Health and Wellbeing Regulation 2019](#) for more information.

What to expect at your next renewal

- All applications to renew or obtain a pest control licence will be subject to the harmonised minimum training and licencing requirements.
- Licences previously issued with “General Authorisation” will now be listed as “General Authorisation (excluding timber pests)” or “General Authorisation (including timber pests)” depending on the units of competency completed and provided to the department.
- Licences will continue to be issued electronically as PDF’s and sent via email.

End of the transitional period for “Grandfather clause” exemptions

In addition to the changes to licence authorisations for timber pest control above, the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 included the removal of the “Grandfather Clause” exemption for licensing qualification requirements. This change was made in line with efforts to harmonise competency across jurisdictions in Australia.

Following the end of the transitional period (31/12/2021), all licences will now only be renewed or issued based on the harmonised minimum training requirements (see: [Public Health and Wellbeing Regulation 2019](#) for more information).

Therefore, operators previously licensed under the Grandfather Clause will be required to demonstrate formally that they meet the prescribed competency requirements.

To clarify your individual requirements ahead of your next renewal please get in touch with the Pesticide Safety Team. Details of these changes were previously communicated to the industry prior to the implementation of the regulations, through earlier editions of the Pesticide Safety eNewsletter and in personalised email correspondence.

Automatic Mutual Recognition

Automatic mutual recognition (AMR) allows a person who is licensed or registered for an occupation in one jurisdiction to be considered registered to perform the same activities in another jurisdiction, without the need to go through further application processes or pay additional registration fees (conditions apply).

For further information regarding eligibility and to make a mandatory notification of intent to work in Victoria please see our webpage - [Automatic mutual recognition \(health.vic.gov.au\)](#).

Pre-construction timber pest management

A pest control operator (PCO) is defined in the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (PHW Act) as ‘a person who carries on or holds themselves out in any way as carrying on the business of controlling, destroying or repelling pests’. The PHW Act requires that anyone who uses pesticides, or permits another person to use pesticides in the course of a business of a pest control operator in Victoria, must hold a valid licence (see: [Pest control legislation - health.vic](#)).

Products which are impregnated with a chemical are considered to be a pesticide under the PHW Act and therefore a licence is required for their installation. These products include: impregnated sheeting such Kordon Termite Barrier, Homeguard Flexi Collars, and TERM-seal Multi Purpose Active Termite and Waterproof Barrier.

We are aware of the handling and installation of these products by unauthorised persons and are currently considering enforcement options. The penalty for non-compliance is 120 units for the individual applying the pesticides and up to 300 units for any business complicit in the application. Information regarding possible

non-compliance should be directed to the Pesticide Safety Team for investigation in accordance with the PHW Act.

Any registered chemical product used to manage timber pest risks must be installed according to the product label provisions.

The scope of the pest control provisions do not extend to the regulation of termite certification or occupancy permits which are laid out in relevant building legislation. These issues are best referred to the [Victorian Building Authority](#).

Ongoing Investigation

The Department of Health, Pesticide Safety Team has received numerous complaints concerning multiple businesses which may be offering pest control services across Victoria and interstate while unlicensed.

The complaints we have received vary in nature, including customer services issues such as ineffective treatments and excessive cost; obtaining financial advantage by deception; bullying, intimidation and threats of violence by operators; the potential use of pesticide contrary to the label directs; occupational health and safety issues such as inappropriate clothing and non-compliant vehicles; and alleged wildlife/possum control offences.

The Pesticide Safety Team takes complaints of this nature seriously and continues to investigate for any non-compliance with the pest control regulatory scheme. A procedure has been put in place to manage complaints, so we encourage your concerned clients to contact us directly with any information about potential unlicensed operators.

Issues regarding cost of treatment and service warranties are outside the scope of the pest control regulatory scheme and should be directed to [Consumer Affairs](#). Additionally, concerns about Wildlife should be referred to the [Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action](#). Any matters relating to personal safety should be reported to Victoria Police immediately.

Update your contact details

We have moved to a 'paperless office' to improve our services, streamline processing times, and provide efficient communication. It is essential to ensure that we have your current contact details so that you don't miss out on important correspondence, such as your licence renewal. Please take the time to advise us of any changes by sending an email to the Pesticide Safety Team at pesticidesafety@health.vic.gov.au.

Phone hours

Our phone hours are from 9.00am to 1.00pm, Monday to Friday. This allows our Registration and Licensing Team dedicated time in the afternoon to process licence applications and respond to email enquiries.

Contact us

Direct all enquiries to the Pesticide Safety Team:

Phone: 1300 767 469 (Monday to Friday 9am-1pm)

Fax: 1300 769 274

Email: pesticidesafety@health.vic.gov.au

Website: [Pesticide use and Pest Control](#)

Feedback

Has this newsletter been useful to you? Please contact us by email at pesticidesafety@health.vic.gov.au to share your comments with us or make any suggestions as to what you would like to see in future newsletters.

Submission to the eNewsletter

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

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