

2022 STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR PESTICIDE APPLICATOR CERTIFICATION EXAMS

UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office (PIO) and Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)

INTRODUCTION

This document describes practical procedures of administering pesticide applicator exams. The primary audience consists of UF/IFAS employees and Master Gardener volunteers that conduct pesticide applicator certification exams.

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1. PESTICIDE APPLICATOR EXAMS ADMINISTERED BY UF/IFAS EMPLOYEES AND OTHER QUALIFIED ADMINISTRATORS

RESTRICTED-USE AGRICULTURAL CATEGORY EXAMS (CHAPTER 487)

- Aerial Application
- Agricultural Animal
- Agricultural Row Crop
- Agricultural Tree Crop
- Aquatic Pest Control
- Chlorine Gas Infusion
- Demonstration and Research
- Forest Pest Control
- General Standards (Core)
- Natural Areas Weed Management
- Organotin Antifouling Paint
- Ornamental and Turf Pest Control
- Private Applicator Agricultural Pest Control
- Raw Agricultural Commodity Fumigation
- Regulatory Inspection and Sampling*
- Regulatory Pest Control*
- Right-of-Way Pest Control
- Seed Treatment
- Sewer Root Control
- Soil and Greenhouse Fumigation
- Wood Treatment

*Only available to FDACS employees. Contact FDACS to schedule.

STRUCTURAL CATEGORY EXAMS (CHAPTER 482)

- General Household Pest Control
- Lawn and Ornamental
- Limited Commercial Landscape Maintenance
- Limited Commercial Wildlife Management
- Limited Lawn and Ornamental
- Limited Structural
- Special ID Card

- Structural Fumigation
- Termite and Wood Destroying Organisms

PUBLIC HEALTH EXAMS (CHAPTER 388)

- Public Health Pest Control
- Public Health Director's**

**Must be approved through FDACS and office must contact FDACS prior to the exam being mailed to the office.

For more information about the requirements and description of each category, see the publication: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/PI292>

2. WHO MAY ADMINISTER PESTICIDE APPLICATOR CERTIFICATION EXAMS?

An exam administrator must be approved by both FDACS and the Pesticide Information Office. An approved exam administrator must be **present** during any pesticide exam session. Exams must be administered by individuals whose impartiality cannot reasonably be called into question. Only the following persons may administer pesticide applicator certification exams, once approved:

- FDACS personnel
- UF/IFAS personnel (campus faculty, includes extension agents, program assistants, and county employees who work for a county extension office)

Persons who work for or operate a commercial, for-profit pesticide business, either education or application business may not administer (or assist in administering) pesticide applicator certification exams.

Only persons taking the examinations and FDACS-approved exam administrators may be present during an examination session. All other persons (visitors, spectators, work associates, commercial trainers, etc.) must remain outside the exam area until the exam session is completed.

Designated volunteers, such as Master Gardener Volunteers, may serve as exam proctors. This means that they can sit in the testing room to alleviate the exam administrator. They are not authorized to answer questions about exams or the process, licensing, or provide administrative support.

HOW DOES ONE BECOME AN ADMINISTRATOR?

1. Contact the Pesticide Information Office via Daisy Taylor: daisy.taylor@ufl.edu and a welcome packet will be sent.
2. The Pesticide Information Office will send an email to prospective administrator with instructions on how to take the initial Exam Administrators training via Canvas. You must pass the quizzes by 100%. You have two attempts per quiz. Please contact the PIO if more than two attempts are needed.
3. Once the exam administrator course in Canvas is successfully completed, let Daisy know and fill out the FDACS exam admin form: <https://pested.ifas.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-exam-admin-agreement-form-FDACS.pdf>
Additionally, you can contact Daisy Taylor for the form as well.
4. Once this form is completed email the form to Derrick Pereira for approval. (derrick.pereira@fdacs.gov) and Daisy Taylor daisy.taylor@ufl.edu
5. Once these steps are complete you will be added to the exam administrators listserv as well. This is a primary means for the Pesticide Information Office to communicate important updates or issues.

Recertification

Once you have completed the initial training, you are now certified for one year. Annually, the PIO will contact you to complete your recertification training. During your second year as an exam administrator, you are also expected to obtain a pesticide license in a category and also Demonstration and Research.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE TERM “CLOSED BOOK”

Each pesticide applicator certification exam is written only in English and must be administered as a closed-book examination. The term “closed-book” means *each examinee must interpret exam questions and choose answers without assistance from any source.*

- Examinees are prohibited from having a phone, calculator, watch, or any other personal items with them during the examination. Only materials provided by the exam administrator are allowed.
- An examinee may not refer to any reading materials except those accompanying the exam, such as product labels, photos, line drawings, and calculation formulas and

conversion factors. All these materials are provided by the exam administrator, or are built into the exam materials themselves (booklet and computer).

- An examinee may not refer to any electronic devices, such as cell phones, digital cameras, smart watches, and personal programmable calculators. Standard calculators are issued by exam administrators for all exams involving calculations.
- Individuals taking the Structural Fumigation exam are allowed to use their personal fumigation calculators (apps on electronic devices are prohibited). A fumigation calculator is provided with the web-based structural fumigation exam.
- No person may in any way aid or assist an examinee's understanding of any exam question or answer options during an exam session.

NOTE: During an exam session, an exam administrator may answer examinees' questions about the mechanics of exam administration. (For example, explain how to properly mark answers on the answer sheet; show where to find or record an exam booklet's version number; etc.) for individuals needing further assistance, refer to the [ADA section](#).

If a question arises about an exam question during an exam, the administrator may take a screen shot of the question with their phone. Send the screen shot (pested@ifas.ufl.edu) and the name of the individual, exam name, and voucher number so that the question can be reviewed.

4. PREPARING FOR A PESTICIDE APPLICATOR EXAM SESSION

COMMON CLIENT QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE EXAMS:

- *Are exams available in any languages other than English?* No. All exams are written in English and there is no translation to other languages legally allowed. Since pesticide labels are often written in English only, the examinee must demonstrate competence of the language.
- *May I use notes, my personal calculator, or study manuals?* No. All exams are conducted as "closed-book."
- *Do I need to show identification in order to take exams?* Yes. All exams require the examinee to bring and give their driver's license or government-issued identification to the exam administrator during the exam.
- *May I bring other people along with me who will not be taking exams?* We encourage you not to but if you do so, only those actually taking an exam may be present in the exam area during the session.

PRIOR TO AN EXAM SESSION, DETERMINE:

- How many people will be taking exams. Consider using the scheduling feature on <https://pesticideexam.ifas.ufl.edu> so you don't overbook. For a video on using the schedule feature see: <https://ifas-pio-county-faculty-training.catalog.instructure.com/courses/testing-features-and-updates>
- How many testing computers will be available or which category exam booklets will be needed.
- If using exam booklets, are they clean copies that contain no markings.
- If more exam booklets are needed, please contact the UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office at least **two weeks** prior to the date of the exam. Exam booklets may be checked out on a loan basis.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE EXAMINEES:

- No electronic devices other than a personal fumigation calculator (not a smart phone app). There is one available on the computer.
- A government issued id.
- A voucher number/s. The process to receive the voucher is described below.

5. HOW TO CONDUCT A PESTICIDE APPLICATOR CERTIFICATION EXAM SESSION

COMPUTER EXAMS (PREFERRED)

Prior to the exam(s), individuals must apply with FDACS to receive their voucher numbers:

<https://aesecomm.fdacs.gov/Default.aspx>

- A single application at this site can be used to generate up to 5 vouchers
- Vouchers are generated 1 voucher for 1 exam per each attempt. So each time they take a test they will need a unique voucher number.
- Prior to the exam(s), have your administrator and exam computers ready, plugged in and turned on.
- Locate an area for the administrator, registration, and for cell phones, identification, personal items. Place the "No Cell Phone" signs at this location and also at the entry.
- If you have used the scheduling feature, it is helpful to download the report to check off who is there and have their voucher numbers available.
- To each examinee, distribute:
 - Clean scratch paper
 - #2 lead pencil

- A standard calculator for appropriate category exams
- The calculation formulas and conversion factors document for appropriate category exams
- You can also provide a hardcopy of the label/images (they are available on the computer or can be downloaded from the exam administration site from the reference materials tab on the left side of the screen)
- Verify the examinee is present and collect their cell phone and driver's license or government ID.
- At this time, you may want to validate the voucher number and provide a 6-digit access code to the examinee. This must be done prior to them starting their exam.
- Introduce yourself and any assistant(s) and briefly explain your role(s).
- Read instructions out loud. (listed below)
- Solicit questions about the rules and clarify any concerns that arise.

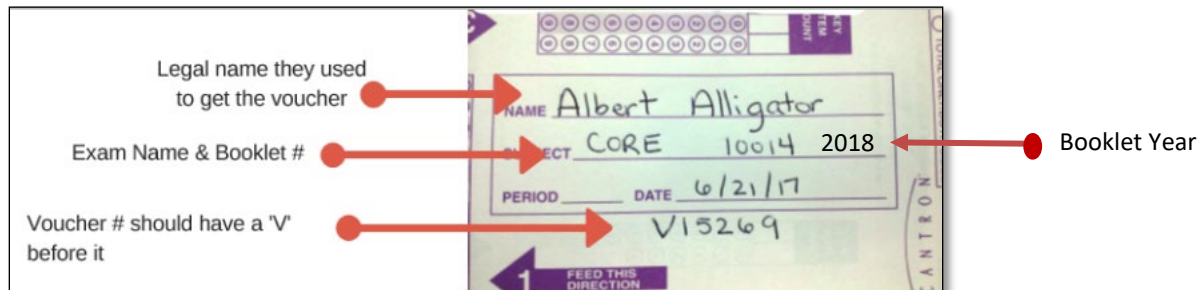
PAPER EXAMS

Prior to the exam(s), individuals must apply with FDACS to receive their voucher numbers:

<https://aesecomm.fdacs.gov/Default.aspx>

- Prior to the exam(s), have your administrator and paper exams, scantrons ready
- Locate an area for the administrator, registration, and for cell phones, identification, personal items. Place the "No Cell Phone" signs at this location and also at the entry.
- If you have used the scheduling feature, it is helpful to download the report to check off who is there and have their voucher numbers available. You are also required to keep a record of booklet numbers assigned to each examinee and the exam category and can be included on this sheet.
- To each examinee, distribute:
 - Clean scratch paper
 - #2 lead pencil
 - A standard calculator for appropriate category exams
 - The calculation formulas and conversion factors document for appropriate category exams
- Verify the examinee is present and collect their cell phone and driver's license or government ID.
- Provide them with their appropriate exam and scantron. (large scantrons are for RUP exams and skinny ones are for limited exams)
- At this time, you may want to validate the voucher number. This must be done the day of their exam and indicates that person actually took the paper exam.

- Introduce yourself and any assistant(s) and briefly explain your role(s).
- Read instructions out loud. (listed below)
- Walk them through filling out the scantron.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR EXAMS TAKERS (TO BE READ OUT LOUD BY ADMINISTRATOR)

- No cell phones, digital cameras, smart watches or personal calculators are allowed.
- Bathroom breaks are allowed individually during the exam.
- No smoking breaks during an exam.
- No talking.
- If cheating is suspected, your exam may be suspended and you may be asked to retest at a later time.
- All materials, including scratch paper and labels will be returned to the administrators at the end.
- Ask if they have questions.

6. EXAM SESSION RULES*

- No visitors. Only exam administrators and those actually taking exams are permitted.
- Food, beverages, and tobacco products are not permitted in the exam area.
- No cell phones, digital cameras, smart watches, and personal programmable calculators are allowed. Standard calculators will be issued by the exam administrator. Place "no cell phone" signs in visible locations.
- Maximum time allowed for RUP, Public Health, and Limited exams is two hours (120 minutes). Pest control exams allow for 4 hours.
- Seat examinees apart from each other (whenever possible, have them occupy alternate seats).

- Make certain that personal items are not brought into the exam area. If so, the exam administrator is not responsible for these items. Personal items brought into the exam area:
 - Must be stored away from the seating area.
 - Be kept in a place designated by the exam administrator.
 - Must remain stored until completion of all exams.
- During exam sessions, visits to the restroom must occur separately – one person in the restroom at a time.
 - When an exam is not in use, such as a restroom visit, the answer form and scratch paper must be turned face down on the table.
- Florida law requires exams be conducted closed-book (see previous section describing the meaning of “closed-book”).
- Take the examinee’s driver’s license (or government-issued id) prior to issuing an exam.
 - If taking more than one exam, issue one exam, answer form, and clean sheet of scratch paper at a time.
 - Record the exam booklet category, booklet number, voucher number, and examinee’s last name.
 - If appropriate, assign alternate exam versions to adjacently-seated examinees.
- After an examinee completes an exam, verify:
 - The name on the answer sheet and notification form matches the name on the government-issued identification card.
 - The examinee returned all exam materials (depending on the exam - exam booklet, answer sheet, labels, formulas, and sheet of scratch paper).
 - The returned exam booklet is free of markings.
 - The answer sheet bears the examinee’s name, exam title, exam identification number, and voucher number.
 - **RETURN DRIVER’S LICENSE (OR GOVERNMENT-ISSUED ID) ONLY AFTER ALL MATERIALS ARE RETURNED.**
- Return all completed exam answer forms immediately to FDACS for grading. It is helpful to include a cover sheet that includes the county, exam administrator, examinee name, exam taken, and voucher number. If using computer testing then you do not have to send anything to FDACS after the testing.
- Client Privacy and Confidentiality. Exam answer sheets should be photocopied for exam administrator records.
 - All photocopied documents are to be destroyed within 1 year following an exam event.

***Exam administrators reserve the right to terminate an exam and void an examinee's final score for failure to comply with any of these rules.**

7. HOW TO MANAGE PESTICIDE APPLICATOR EXAM BOOKLETS

- Because one “missing” (stolen) exam booklet compromises the integrity of that category’s exam statewide, UF/IFAS employees should always recall that pesticide applicator certification exams are controlled UF/IFAS documents, and limit exam booklet access to UF/IFAS and FDACS employees only.
- Because they are attractive targets for theft, always keep exam booklets stored under lock and key when they are not being used in an exam session.
- When removing exam booklets from secure storage, record each booklet’s serial number on the certification exam storage file’s checkout sheet (or logbook).
- All exam booklets should be held within the county extension office.
 - If cooperating with additional county offices for a large group event and extra exams are needed, transporting exams from the assigned office may be done so only at the discretion of either the FDACS Bureau of Licensing and Enforcement (BLE) or the UF/IFAS PIO.
 - **Under no circumstances should exam booklets be photocopied.**
 - If extra exams are needed for a large event, they may be checked out on a loan basis from the UF/IFAS PIO if a request is made to the UF/IFAS PIO at least two weeks in advance of the event.
- Each exam booklet removed for use in an exam session should be kept in the exam administrator’s immediate possession until assigned to an examinee.
- Inspect an exam booklet and confirm it free of markings and disfigurements prior to selecting it for use during an exam session. For exam booklets containing marking or notations made by prior users:
 - Keep the exam booklet secure;
 - Prominently disfigure the exam booklet’s front cover (use permanent-ink marker);
 - Notify the Pesticide Information Office of the exam booklet’s number and condition; and
 - Arrange with the Pesticide Information Office (pested@ifas.ufl.edu or 352-392-4721) for the exam booklet’s return and replacement.

- If you discover an exam booklet is missing, incomplete, defaced or otherwise defective, inform the Pesticide Information Office (352-392-4721) at your earliest convenience. Address for PIO: 7922 NW 71st St, Gainesville, FL, 32653

8. CHEATING DURING A CERTIFICATION EXAM*

Examination cheating is the giving or taking of any information intended to influence the recipient's scored response to an exam question and the violation of any of the exam session rules. Any evidence of cheating nullifies that examinee's score. If such an act cooperatively involves two examinees, then both are cheating.

UF/IFAS employees conducting pesticide applicator certification exam sessions are exam administrators – not police officers. Hence, there is never a need for you to personally confront any examinee whom you think is acting inappropriately. Your judgement as an exam administrator has the full support of the UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office and FDACS. An exam administrator is not required to confront an individual suspected of cheating, use the following procedure to deal with dishonesty (cheating) observed during an examination session:

- Privately note the circumstances and the individual(s) involved.
- Allow the examinee(s) to complete and return his/her/their exam materials. Keep these papers separate from other examinees' materials. Do not submit the separated materials for processing before contacting the FDACS Bureau of Licensing and Enforcement (BLE).
- At your earliest convenience, inform the FDACS BLE (850-617-7870) of the incident, the examinee(s), and the exam(s) involved.
- Cheating can also take the form of assistance from an exam administrator. This is a serious breach of trust and any exam administrators caught violating this trust can be reprimanded, up to and including termination.
- For computer exams note the examinee name, voucher number, test being taken and send this information to FDACS as soon as possible 850-617-7870 and Derrick Pereira derrick.pereira@fdacs.gov and Tamara James tamara.james@fdacs.gov

***Exam administrators reserve the right to terminate an exam and void an examinee's final score for suspected cheating if comfortable with the circumstances.**

9. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) can make reasonable accommodations to the exam administration process in certain circumstances. A reasonable accommodation is one that would not fundamentally alter the licensing program. Giving an examinee more time to read an exam or providing the exam in a larger font would not fundamentally alter the program. If a time-extension accommodation is granted, the examinee shall provide documentation from FDACS to the Exam Administrator indicating such accommodation. The examinee shall be allowed a 2-hour extension on examination time. However, having someone read the exam for the examinee would fundamentally alter the licensing program and is not allowed. All federal and state registered pesticide labels are in English; hence, the ability to read and comprehend the pesticide label in English is a necessary job element.

Examinees needing assistance should be directed to contact FDACS (850)617-7997 prior to scheduling their exams.

For additional information contact

Daisy Taylor - daisy.taylor@ufl.edu 352-392-4721

Brett Bultemeier – bwbult@ufl.edu 352-294-6941

Erin Harlow – eeeck@ufl.edu 386-752-5384

Canvas Extension Faculty Page – <https://ifas-pio-county-faculty-training.catalog.instructure.com/>

PIO Teams Page –

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3aJLaaAfku6Ss910ygNDIkBfwMZXQ0w5in0sTFwkewHw81%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=84de8516-9aa2-4024-ac31-2823ee00d545&tenantId=0d4da0f8-4a31-4d76-ace6-0a62331e1b84>