



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE**

ANDY GIPSON
COMMISSIONER

PRESS RELEASE

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MDAC Releases New Guidance Regarding Pesticide Applicator Certification and Licenses in Light of COVID-19

JACKSON, Miss. - Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce Andy Gipson announced that the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC) is releasing new guidance regarding the testing, certification and licensure of all pesticide operators and applicators regulated in Mississippi in light of the COVID-19 emergency. In order to comply with mandates to not hold gatherings of no more than 10 people and to practice social distancing, this guidance was put into place to protect the public's health and safety.

"At this critical time when our farmers are getting ready to plant their crops, it is vital that we make available all resources to them so they can continue providing our food and fiber without disruption. We appreciate the Mississippi State University Extension Service for working with us," said Commissioner Gipson.

MDAC is issuing the following guidance to address the need for the use of pesticides for food production; food cultivation, including farming, livestock, aquaculture, and horticulture; and the reduction of household pests.

Commercial and Licensed Pesticide Applicators:

- For all license holders (*persons who advertise or receive fees for: Wood Destroying Insect Control, General Pest and Rodent Control, Horticultural Pest and Weed Control, Orchard Pest Control, Domestic Animal Pest Control, Fumigation Pest Control, Agricultural Pest and Weed Control, Aquatic Weed Control, and Right-of-Way*) whose certification expires in 2020, MDAC will extend certification for 1 year.
 - For example, if your license expires April 11, 2020, you will receive a revised license with an expiration date of April 11, 2021.
- Commercial certification (*persons who use or supervise the use of a restricted use pesticides that cannot charge a fee or advertise for performing applications*) will be extended for 1 year.
- New Licensed and Commercial applicators will be reviewed and tested on a case-by-case basis.

Private Applicators:

- For all private applicators (*persons who use or supervise the use of pesticide which is classified for restricted use for purposes of producing any agricultural commodity on their own or leased property*) whose certification expires in 2020, MDAC will extend their certification period for 1 year.
- Training for new private applicator certification will be handled by Mississippi State University Extension Service (MSU-ES) through your local county extension office. MSU-ES county extension offices can be found on the following website: <http://extension.msstate.edu/about-extension/county-extension-offices>

These measures will remain in effect until further notice. Please direct any questions to the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce – Bureau of Plant Industry by calling (662) 325-3390.

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