



The purpose of this newsletter, produced by Queensland Health's Environmental Health Unit, is to inform licensed pest management technicians (PMT) primarily about regulatory matters, impacting on their industry.

The industry is regulated by the *Pest Management Act 2001* (the Act) and *Pest Management Regulation 2003* (the Regulation) to protect the public and pest management technicians from health risks associated with pest management activities which include pest control and fumigation activities.

Notifiable incidents

Queensland Health environmental health officers investigated a reported notifiable incident recently, following notification from a PMT.

The Act requires the PMT to notify the chief executive of Queensland Health immediately about notifiable incidents that occur when the technician is carrying out or supervising a pest management activity (see section 123 of the Act).

A notifiable incident refers to an exposure, spillage or other release of a pesticide or fumigant that adversely affects, or is likely to affect, a person's health.

The investigations found that the pesticide applications were performed satisfactorily and the PMT had provided the occupier with a correct written information notice, as required by the Regulation. It is believed the occupiers were quite sensitive to the pesticide formulation.

Information to be given to occupiers or others about pest control work performed including residential multi-unit complexes

Under section 13 of the Regulation, a technician undertaking or supervising a pest control activity, must provide a pest control advice notice that is signed and dated by him/her.

The pest control advice notice must be provided immediately before or immediately after the activity is carried out. Who you provide the pest control advice notice to will depend on whether the premises are occupied or unoccupied at the time of treatment.

For premises that are occupied, the notice must be:

- personally given to a person who resides at or is an occupier of, the premises if practicable; or
- left in a conspicuous place, such as on a table, counter or in a letter box.

For premises that are un-occupied, the notice must be personally given, or posted to the person who:

- owns the premises; or
- requested the activity, including for example a letting agent.

The notice must contain the following information:

- the technician's licence number
- the technician's name or the name and business name of your employer (if applicable)
- for each pesticide used, the name by which it is marketed or sold
- the active constituent of the pesticide
- each part of the premises in which the pesticide is used
- any general precautions that should be taken for the pest control activity. Please note that while precautions may be the same for many jobs, other jobs will require specific advisory precautions.

Recently a number of enquiries were received from individuals occupying residential multi-unit type complexes stating that they have not received written pest control advice. To comply with section 13, the PMT must ensure the occupier of each unit is provided with the written pest control advice. Providing pest control advice to the unit complex management or body corporate only does not satisfy the requirement of section 13.

In addition, if the common areas of the complex are to be treated (e.g. foyer, garage, gardens), each individual unit occupier should be provided with pest control advice. In practice, however, written pest control advice in the form of a notice may be clearly and obviously displayed in these areas alerting residents to the pest control work to be undertaken, in progress or recently completed.

Fumigation – clearance certificates

Section 27 of the Act requires a PMT to:

- give the person who requested the fumigation a clearance certificate when the PMT believes the fumigation space (i.e. licence site environments) is safe for entry.

- ensure the clearance certificate is signed by the PMT, dated and states the particulars contained in sub-section 27(3).

Competency of recently qualified pest management technicians

As an employer, you may have concerns about a new employee's competency, including the quality of training delivery and assessment, or other matters involving training. Enquiries can be directed to the Department of Education Training and the Arts. To contact the department's complaints unit, phone 1800 600 039 or email: TO.complaints@det.qld.gov.au

Don't permit or require another person to carry out pest management activities

A PMT or a person in the business of providing a pest management activity must not permit or require another person to carry out pest management activities unless the other person is:

- a PMT who is authorised to carry out the activity under the technician's licence; or
- a trainee who is properly supervised in carrying out the activity by the employer.

Explanation of terms

The term 'properly supervised' is defined in the Act. A trainee means an individual who is at least 17 years of age and who is being trained towards obtaining a pest management qualification.

A pest management activity (pest control and fumigation activity) includes preparing a pesticide e.g. measuring, mixing or weighing the pesticide and using the pesticide. This can include a pesticide impregnated in a bait or incorporated into a physical barrier.

Prosecutions and licence cancellations

A PMT was found guilty of including information that was known to be false in a certificate of termite treatment, and failing to provide pest management information to the occupier about the pest management activity. The amount of the fine orders was \$1,000.

In another case, a PMT was found guilty of failure to provide pest management information about the pest management activity, failure to supervise a trainee and failure to notify the chief executive of a notifiable incident. The amount of fine orders was \$5,000.

And another case where a PMT was found guilty of performing a pest management activity without supervision or a licence for that activity. The amount of fine orders was \$1,000.

In two of these cases, the PMTs were served Show Cause Notices as to why their pest management technician licences should not be cancelled or suspended for a period of time. One of these licensees has had their licence suspended for six months while the other had their licence suspended for three months.

Guidelines for the safe use of pesticides in non-agricultural workplaces

These guidelines were released in late 2007 and have been adopted by some states and territories.

Developed by the National Pest Management Industry and Government Sector Advisory Group, the guidelines can be found on the Queensland Health website -

http://www.health.qld.gov.au/industry/poisons_pest/default.asp under fact sheets. It includes a link to the Victorian Government Health website.

Contact details and finding information

Enquiries concerning this newsletter can be made to the Environmental Health Unit on (07) 3234 0938.

This and earlier newsletters are available along with other information on pest management including all licence forms at

http://www.health.qld.gov.au/industry/poisons_pest/default.asp

The Acts and regulations can be found at www.legislation.qld.gov.au

Enquiries or complaints regarding pest management regulation and licensing can be made to a Population Health Unit listed below.

PHU offices

Brisbane North Ph 3624 1111	Mackay Ph 4968 6611
Brisbane South Ph 3000 9148	Mt Isa Ph 4744 4846
Bundaberg Ph 4150 2780	Redcliffe Ph 3142 1800
Cairns Ph 4050 3600	Rockhampton Ph 4920 6989
Charleville Ph 4656 8100	Sunshine Coast Ph 5409 6600
Gold Coast Ph 5509 7222	Toowoomba Ph 4631 9888
Hervey Bay Ph 4120 6000	Townsville Ph 4753 9000
Logan Ph 3412 6070	West Moreton Ph 3810 1500
Longreach Ph 4658 0859	