New Applicator Certification and Continuing Education (CE) Regulations.

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On August 5, 2015, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) proposed changes to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 40, Part 171, "Certification Requirements for Applicators of Restricted Use Pesticides." The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) submitted public comments to the U.S. EPA regarding these proposed changes. The initial proposal included new license categories, expanded continuing education (CE) hour requirements for each category, expanded knowledge requirements, and designated time frames for accumulating CE hours.

On January 4, 2107, U.S. EPA finalized their new "Certification Requirements for Applicators of Restricted Use Pesticides" rule. This rule becomes effective March 6, 2017. The new rule has been scaled back from what was initially proposed.

The changes for private applicators include: expanded knowledge requirements, new license categories for soil and non-soil fumigation, and passing a written private applicator exam or completing an approved training program. The changes for commercial certified applicators are the addition of two new categories for non-soil fumigation and sodium cyanide predator control. Additionally, all certified applicators and noncertified applicators must be 18 years old, unless the noncertified applicator is using the restricted use pesticide under the direct supervision of a private applicator who is an immediate family member.

The revised rule has a five year implementation time. Each state has three years to develop a state plan to address the new Federal regulations and two years to implement their plan once approved by the U.S. EPA. California is still analyzing the new requirements of this rule to determine licensing options and impacts to California.