

CHALLENGES: EARNING RECERTIFICATION CREDITS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19
Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)
Letter to Applicators and Consultants
July 31, 2020

Commonly Asked Questions

Will ODA be waiving recertification credit requirements for 2020 and 2021?

COVID-19 has brought unwanted disruptions into many systems, creating changes for 2020 and possibly well into 2021. However, there are currently over 100 credits that can be earned through online courses.

Oregon, as well as almost every other state, is not waiving recertification credit requirements. These credit requirements are set in Oregon law and are also part of ODA's cooperative agreement with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ODA is trying to make the best of the situation in helping to ensure your experience will result in the same level of knowledge and training. It isn't an ideal situation and most of us look forward to the return of a classroom or conference setting. Like many people, we also find added value in the post-lecture, peer-to-peer conversations that take place as well as the chance to reconnect with old friends.

With so few in-person classes, how will applicators be able to earn recertification credits in 2020 and 2021? There are currently a few options. We have listed these in order of availability: On-demand online courses (including pre-recorded webinars), live webinars, and a very limited number of in-person events.

ODA is working with others to address the lack of availability of aerial applicator recertification credits.

Where can I see the events and courses offered? Please visit: oda.direct/PestRecertClasses

More educational options to come!

To help applicators earn recertification credits and be successful, ODA helps fund our educational partners at the Oregon State University Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP). Kaci Buhl is the Pesticide Safety Education Program Director.

By the end of August 2020, the PSEP will publish a brochure of information about many educational options that will begin in October. This brochure will be mailed to all Oregon pesticide licensees. Dates, speakers, and topics will also be available on their [website](#). The PSEP is offering at least 14 credits before the end of the calendar year (offered in 2-hour blocks) including both core and non-core topics. Additionally, they will have more than 20 credits planned between January 1 and March 15, 2021. Each of the webinars can serve up to 500 participants.

If you have concerns about connectivity or dates, please contact Kaci Buhl.
Email: Kaci.Buhl@oregonstate.edu Phone: 541-737-8330

Are all courses and events offered listed on the ODA website?

No. There are many "closed" webinars and in-person events that are only offered to members of specific organizations or invited customers. ODA is strongly encouraging event or class sponsors to have more "open" webinars which would be open to all applicators.

What can applicators do to encourage more live webinars and webinars that are open to all applicators?

If you do not see online classes of interest in the OSU PSEP brochure (available by the end of August) or on ODA's website (oda.direct/PestRecertClasses), consider contacting other providers of continuing education for pesticide applicators and let them know about the challenges you're facing. ODA has been reaching out to entities who have previously sponsored courses, but we could use your help.

I live in a remote area with an unreliable internet connection and it has always been hard for me to find recertification courses. What are my options?

Some virtual learning methods require higher-bandwidth technologies than others. For example, you may not need as much bandwidth with a course that is mostly text and a few images, versus a course that incorporates videos. Contact the class sponsor if you have questions about a course format. The age of the computer may also influence speed.

A possible option: There might be agricultural retailers or others who are able to teach live courses and follow ALL COVID-19 statewide and county requirements. If you have questions about these requirements, please visit ODA's website for links to accurate and updated information, <https://www.oregon.gov/ODA/agriculture/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>

ODA has heard that some course sponsors are playing recordings of their live webinars for small in-person gatherings in rural areas when applicators are unable to participate online. These gatherings follow social distancing and mask-wearing requirements, and are hosted by a person who can answer questions generated by participants. Attendees sign attendance sheets and these are submitted to ODA. Prior to offering trainings, class sponsors must work with ODA to ensure credits can be awarded. See requirements for class sponsors at: oda.direct/SponsorClass

It is critical, if you attend a live course, that you follow all COVID-19 statewide and county requirements. If these requirements are not being followed by attendees, you are strongly advised to leave the course.

What about re-taking the pesticide applicator's exam(s) at the end of the 5-year certification period instead of taking classes online?

There are many people who have done this since they first obtained their license. Currently, 12 testing centers are open and we anticipate more opening up over time. Find them at: <http://oda.direct/TakingPesticideExams>

Who do I contact for more information?

It is best to email: pestx@oda.state.or.us

You can also call: (503) 986-4635.