

Ensuring Continuing Competency
A CTAG Workgroup Telephone Survey

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A national standard for states to ensure continuing competency of pesticide applicators is under discussion. To ensure continuing competency requires states to demonstrate how their measures of quality indicators are linked to desired public outcomes. States that do not have systems in place to demonstrate the link between quality indicators and public outcomes can ensure neither the federal government, nor the public, of continuing competency of pesticide applicators – regardless of the quality level of their recertification program.

To this end CTAG has organized a workgroup to conduct a telephone survey of states' recertification requirements and standards. Both the SLA C&T program and extension PSEP Coordinator are being contacted in each state. This information will be compiled and shared with the full CTAG Board. The information will be part of the discussion on whether or not CTAG decides to move forward to create an issue paper proposing to establish national standards for continuing competency of certified pesticide applicators.

In preparation for the telephone survey, please:

- review the questions below
- visit with your SLA/CES counterpart about the survey questions
- decide who will be the survey respondent (SLA, PSEP coordinator or both).

I will be contacting you shortly to arrange a time to conduct the interview.

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Provide answers for both commercial and private applicators

Part I: Characterize State Recertification Requirements

While state certification programs may offer a combination of recertification options, there are three broad and overlapping groupings of state pesticide recertification requirements:

- 1) Obtain recertification by obtaining required topics from multiple approved educational events/workshops (CEUs)
- 2) Obtain recertification by attend an approved workshop that includes all required topics
- 3) Obtain recertification by testing (either as one option, or the only option for recertification)

What are the basic methods for recertifying the federally-defined commercial and private pesticide applicators in your state?

1. Does your state use:
 - a) accumulation of required CEUs from various educational events
 - b) attendance at a workshop that covers all required topics
 - c) testing only
 - d) some combination/option of testing, CEUs and workshops
 - f) or other requirement
2. What are the recertification period(s) in your state?
3. If your state offers multiple methods of recertification, which option does your state prefer applicators to choose?
4. If your state offers multiple methods of recertification, provide a general estimate of the percent of applicators that choose each option
5. Besides the federally defined commercial and private applicator classifications, does your state certify others (pesticide dealers, registered technicians, etc.)?
6. For each **type** of certification, does your state require certification for all pesticide applications or only for RUPs?
7. For each type of applicator certification, does your state require that each applicator be certified, or, may an uncertified applicator work under the supervision of a certified applicator?

Part II: Ensuring Continuing Competency

What is the evidence and reasoning your state provides to justify that its recertification methods ensure the continued competency of pesticide applicators?

1. What methods are in place to ensure the effectiveness and quality of **instructors** at recertification educational events?
2. What methods are in place to ensure that recertification workshop **content** matches federal and state requirements?
3. What methods are in place to ensure educational **quality** (measuring education effectiveness in terms of **outcomes**)?
4. If you allow recertification by examination or reexamination, how does this ensure continued competency of your applicators?
5. Do you have other evidence and reasoning that supports your recertification option(s)?

Why we want to know this?

Justify present systems are working (or not working): is there a problem needing to be solved?

What aspects of the process used in your state are most successful in ensuring continuing competency?

1. List specific aspects that work
2. How do you know they are successful?

Why we want to know this?

To determine what programs could be used as a model – especially in terms of a national standard

Help identify methods that are least disruptive for states to fix

What aspects of your state's process are least successful in ensuring continuing competency?

1. List specific aspects that do not work well
2. How do you know they are least successful?

Why do we want to know this?

To determine where the common problems are

How would you change your state's process to improve ensuring continuing competency?

1. List specifics that would be changed
2. Why do you think this change would be more effective to ensure continuing competency?

Why do we want to know this?

To determine what components states would find desirable for their state (and possibly national standards)

What obstacles do you see to making these changes?

Why do we want to know this?

To ensure that states can be reasonably expected to improve the quality of their recertification programs and make the transition to methods of ensuring continuing competency that meet a national standard

What changes, if any, are planned in your state's current processes, in order to ensure continuing competency?

Why do we want to know this?

To find out where states are going with recertification programs and to identify possible model methods of ensuring continuing competency

Disregarding staffing, funding, and regulatory limitations, what would be the ideal process in your state to ensure continuing competency?

Why do we want to know this?

Methods that are expedient, easy, or inexpensive may be what states are constrained to choose over the best methods for ensuring continuing competency (those that demonstrate the link between measured quality indicators and desired public outcomes).

A national standard to be met by all state certification programs is under discussion. What would you see as a desired national standard to ensure continuing competency of applicators?

Why do we want to know this?

National and state standards for ensuring continuing competency may differ. States may require more than what is required at the federal level. Understanding what states see as necessary to ensure continuing competency will result in a better informed national discussion, and may be instrumental in developing a national standard.