

Commercial Manure Applicator Certification

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION | WWW.IOWADNR.GOV



Relatively flat, dry cropland is ideal for manure application. The DNR recommends avoiding manure application on cropland subject to flooding, on land adjacent to a stream or tile intake, and on steep slopes. State law restricts land application on frozen or snow-covered ground. Find more about land application on the DNR website: www.iowadnr.gov/afo/.

EXEMPTIONS - The following people are exempt from commercial certification, but must still be certified as confinement site manure applicators. Anyone who is:

- actively engaged in farming and trades work with another active farmer,
- employed by an active farmer and applies manure only as an incidental part of the job,
- applying manure as an incidental part of a custom farming operation,
- applying manure as an incidental part of their job.

WHAT IS CERTIFICATION?

State laws passed in 1998 and 2003 require commercial manure applicators and manure application businesses in Iowa to be certified by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). A commercial certificate is a one-year certificate which allows commercial applicators to apply manure for a fee. The certificate and business certificate expire on March 1 of each year. Certification is required of those engaged in transporting, handling, storing or applying manure on behalf of the business.

Types of commercial certification defined by state law include:

1. Commercial manure service (business),
2. Commercial manure service representative (representatives are employees), which includes one manager per business. All representatives must be associated with a business.

Businesses and their representatives must be certified regardless of the source of the manure (open feedlot or confinement feeding operation), the type of manure (liquid, slurry or solid), livestock type and the size of the operation.

A certified representative who owns a confinement site and wants to apply manure from the site does not need a confinement site certificate in addition to having a commercial manure applicator's certificate. However, unless the representative owns the commercial manure service, any violations of state law will be enforced on the commercial manure service employing the representative.

BECOMING CERTIFIED

TRAINING

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach offers training for certification throughout the state. Representatives can choose between taking a training session, passing a test or completing online training annually.

If choosing a training session, state law requires three hours of training. Training sessions are scheduled at most local extension offices in early January. Check extension training times and locations at <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/immag/commercial-manure-applicators>. Or, log in for online training at <https://elearning-dnr.iowa.gov/>.

TESTING

Representatives can choose to take a test, instead of training, at any of six DNR field offices. A passing score is 35 or more correct answers out of 50 multiple choice and true-false questions. Contact a DNR field office (listed on back) to make an appointment. If a representative does not pass the test the first time, he or she may retake it on a different day, attend a training course or complete online training to become certified.

To prepare for the test, representatives should understand Iowa's regulations on manure application.

"Using Manure Nutrients for Crop Production," PMR 1003, may be helpful. It's available at store.extension.iastate.edu/product/pmr1003.

The DNR provides other study resources including two fact sheets on state regulations available at www.iowadnr.gov/afo/.

Look for these Fact Sheets under AFO Resources.

- [Separation Distances](#) for Land Application of Manure (DNR 113)
- [High Quality Water Resources](#) (DNR 117)

CERTIFICATE EXPIRATION

All business licenses and representative certificates expire on March 1 of each year. While new representatives and renewing representatives can become certified at any time during the year, the certificate is valid only through March 1.

After March 1 of each year, representatives renewing their certificates cannot apply manure until they meet training or testing requirements, the DNR receives the training form (542-3300) and all



Commercial manure services must be licensed to land apply manure regardless of the source or type of manure.

applicable fees (certification fee, education fee and late fee for renewals only). The business must be certified before an employee can be certified.

NEW EMPLOYEES

Newly hired, but not yet certified, employees can land apply manure for the first 30 days if they are directly supervised by a certified representative. The supervising representative must be physically present at the application site and be in sight or hearing communication with the new employee at all times. If a prospective employee was previously certified for another CMS business at any time, the 30-day exemption for newly hired employees does not apply and the new employee must be certified prior to manure application.

BUSINESS CERTIFICATION

To be certified, a business must select a manager and submit the following to the DNR:

- Include the training form for the manager who must complete a three-hour certification training course or pass a test every year. (DNR form 542-3300).
- Include the business certification fee and the manager's education fee with the completed [Business form](#) (542-4022).

Representatives can be added at any time. When the business is paying the fees for a representative:

- Include the fees that the business will pay for the representative(s).
- Send fees and the training form (542-3300) to the DNR for each representative the business is paying certification and/or education fees for.

INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION

To become certified or to renew a certificate, a representative (including the manager) must:

- Complete a three-hour certification training course or pass a test every year.
- Submit training form (542-3300) to the DNR.
- Be employed by a certified business as a representative. Pay appropriate fees.
- The representative or the business may pay the individual's certification fee.
- In addition, the representative or the business may pay the education fee. However, an education fee is due for all representatives.

SUBSTITUTION OR TERMINATION OF REPRESENTATIVES

Each employee's certification number is tied to the business' unique certificate number. If the company pays the certification fee for a representative and that representative is terminated, the business can substitute a new representative under the vacant space without paying an additional certification fee.

The DNR will void the old representative's number and assign a new certificate number to the new representative. Businesses must use the [Substitution and Termination form](#) (542-4023) to notify the DNR within 30 days of substituting a representative.

FEES

Certification fees are due on or before March 1.

- The business certification fee is \$200 and includes the manager's certification fee.
- The representative's certification fee is \$75.
- The education fee for all representatives, including managers, is \$25.
- A late fee of \$12.50 per representative is charged for all renewals after March 1. Late fees do not apply to first-time applicants.
- A \$15 fee is charged for issuing each duplicate certificate. Send requests to the Iowa DNR, Manure Application Certification, 502 E 9th St, Des Moines IA 50319.
- Iowa State University Extension and Outreach may charge a fee for attending a training session on a day outside normally scheduled training.

The newly hired representative must complete the required training or testing within 30 days of hiring. Either the representative or the business may pay the education fee. If the representative pays the certification fee, then the representative will not have to pay a second fee if changing companies during the certification period. However, the representative's certification number will be voided at the previous business. A new certificate number will be assigned indicating the association with the new business. Once the training requirement has been met and the education fee paid, the representative will not have to pay an education fee until renewing the certificate.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MANURE SERVICES



Display business license number, the manager's name and the business mailing address prominently on the side of all tanks and vehicles.

LAND APPLICATION

Businesses and their representatives must comply with requirements for land application, including following the minimum separation distances (See DNR [Separation Distances](#) fact sheet and the [High Quality Water Resources](#) fact sheet at www.iowadnr.gov/manureapplicator/).

Applicators must also follow the manure or nutrient management plan (if a plan is required).

REPORT SPILLS

All applicators must report any manure releases within six hours of onset or discovery to the 24-hour spill hotline at 515-725-8694. The spill must also be reported to the county sheriff's office if the spill was on the road and public safety was threatened.

RECORDKEEPING

A business must maintain the following records for three years:

- a copy of the animal feeding operation owner's instructions for manure application (this could be a portion of the manure or nutrient management plan),
- dates that manure was applied or sold,
- the manure application rate, and
- location of fields (1/4 section, section, township, range) where manure was applied.

SIGNAGE

All tanks and vehicles must have signage with 3-inch or larger letters on the side of the tank or vehicle that includes,

- the business license number.
- the name of the manager
- the full business mailing address.

EQUIPMENT AND OPERATION

REQUIREMENTS

- Do not use manure tanks and equipment to haul hazardous or toxic wastes.
- Do not use tanks or equipment in a way that would contaminate drinking water, or endanger the food chain or public health.
- Maintain watertight connections on all pumps and associated piping.
- Prevent direct connections between a drinking water source and the tank or equipment.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Certified representatives can lose their certification or be put on probation if they violate state law or rules. If a certificate is revoked, the representative cannot apply dry or liquid manure to the land. The applicator may reapply for certification after two years and will have to pass a test. Failure to become certified or applying manure without a certificate can result in an administrative order, a civil penalty or a court action. If a business certificate is revoked, the business cannot apply dry or liquid manure to the land. The business may reapply for a license after three years and the manager will have to pass a test.

DEFINITIONS

Commercial manure service (business): A commercial manure service is a sole proprietor or business association engaged in the business of transporting, handling, storing or applying manure for a fee.

Commercial manure service representative (representative): A commercial manure service representative is a manager, employee, agent or contractor of a commercial manure service, if the person is engaged in transporting, handling, storing or applying manure on behalf of the service. A manager is a person actively involved in and makes management decisions in the operation of a commercial manure service. A manager is also a representative.

Confinement feeding operation: an animal feeding operation in which animals are confined to areas which are totally roofed and includes every animal feeding operation that is not an open feedlot operation.

Open feedlot operation: an unroofed or partially roofed animal feeding operation if crop, vegetation, or forage growth or residue is not maintained during the period that animals are confined in the operation.

Important Links	Iowa DNR Field Offices
DNR Animal Feeding Operations: www.iowadnr.gov/afo/ Online training: https://elearning-dnr.iowa.gov/ Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 65: https://www.legis.iowa.gov/law/administrativeRules Iowa State University Iowa Manure Management Action Group: www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag	Northeast Manchester 563-927-2640 North central Mason City 641-424-4073 Northwest Spencer 712-262-4177 Southwest Atlantic 712-243-1934 South central Des Moines 515-725-0268 Southeast Washington 319-653-2135
Important Information	
Your Business Certificate Number _____ Your Certificate Number _____	
Report spills to DNR field offices during office hours. After hours, weekends or holidays, call the 24-hour spill line 515-725-8694 .	



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

CAUTION: This document is only a summary of administrative rules contained in 567 IAC chapters 65; it is a guidance document and should not be used as replacement for the administrative rules. While every effort has been made to assure the accuracy of this information, the administrative rules will prevail in the event of a conflict between this document and the administrative rules.

DNR 115: October 2002, revised November 2022