Commercial Manure Applicator Certification

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 www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag/mac.html. Or, log in for online training at iowadnr.gov/manureapPLICATOR.

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.
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.

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

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/).

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

**REPORT SPLILLS**

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.

**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. Ninth 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.

**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.

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**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.

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**IMPORTANT LINKS**

- DNR Animal Feeding Operations  
  www.iowadnr.gov/afo/  
  Online training: www.iowadnr.gov/manureappplicator
- Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 65  
- Iowa State University Iowa Manure Management Action Group  
  www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag

**IOWA DNR FIELD OFFICES**

- **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.

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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.