

> Quick Guide

Approved Handlers (Pesticides)

Preventing or managing risk to people and the environment

The Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996 covers the safe management of all hazardous substances. This includes those that are explosive, flammable, corrosive, toxic and harmful to the environment (ecotoxic).

This guide specifically relates to pesticides that were transferred to the HSNO Act on 1 July 2004.

The HSNO Act requires that many pesticides are under the control of an Approved Handler. In addition, the transfer of some very hazardous pesticides need to be recorded or 'tracked'. To take delivery of a tracked pesticide you will need to ensure that an Approved Handler is in place. This guide explains the role of Approved Handler and how to become one.

Who is an Approved Handler?

An Approved Handler is a person who is competent and certified to handle certain pesticides. To become an Approved Handler you must meet the requirements of the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (Personnel Qualifications) Regulations 2001. It is an easy process, particularly if you have handled the pesticides before.

What are the responsibilities of an Approved Handler?

An Approved Handler must make sure particularly hazardous pesticides are handled safely, and that they do not cause harm to people, nor damage to the environment. The Approved Handler will also be expected to provide guidance to other people handling the pesticides, who are not Approved Handlers, and be available to assist them if needed.

Where is an Approved Handler required?

Not all pesticides require an Approved Handler. It is only the most hazardous ones. Specific lists are available:

- Pesticides requiring Approved Handler and Tracking controls
www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/pesticides/pahtr.pdf
- Pesticides requiring Approved Handler control
www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/pesticides/pah.pdf

When is an Approved Handler not needed?

Not everyone handling hazardous pesticides is required to be an Approved Handler. Another person may handle a hazardous pesticide if an Approved Handler:

- is present at the location where a toxic, corrosive, or ecotoxic pesticide is being handled; and
- has provided guidance to the person actually handling the pesticide; and
- is available to provide assistance at all times while the pesticide is being handled.

The Approved Handler need not be present if the pesticide is secured so that a person cannot gain access without a key or similar device. In addition, if an Approved Handler is only required because the pesticide is ecotoxic it may be handled by a person who is not an Approved Handler if the pesticide is kept in closed containers.

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I have never needed a licence before!

The HSNO Act has introduced the need for an Approved Handler Test Certificate for pesticides. However, having people trained to handle hazardous pesticides has always been a requirement of the law. The HSNO legislation is formalising this requirement where the most hazardous pesticides are used.

Are there any exceptions to the rules?

In some instances another qualification will be considered equivalent to being an Approved Handler. An example is the transport of packaged goods by road. If the Land Transport Rules are complied with, and the driver has a dangerous goods (D) endorsement on the driver licence, this is considered equivalent to an Approved Handler for transport of the goods. There may be other instances where an equivalent qualification may be acceptable, for example qualifications issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Maritime Safety Authority (MSA).

How do I become an Approved Handler for pesticides?

There are two ways to become an Approved Handler.

1. Transitional Certificate (Temporary) – ‘Deemed’ Approved Handler

If you have been handling a pesticide (or one with similar hazardous properties) under previous legislation, and you have been working with the pesticide for two consecutive years since July 1999, you can ‘deem’ yourself to be an Approved Handler. ERMA New Zealand has prepared a form¹ that you should complete to help you confirm you have the necessary qualifications² to be a transitional Approved Handler for pesticides. This is a transitional qualification to help you into the new regime and will last until 31 December 2006. By that time it must be replaced with a full certificate.

You will need to retain your form to present to a supplier when obtaining tracked pesticides, or when requested by an enforcement officer.

2. Full Approved Handler Certificate

You will need to demonstrate your knowledge, experience and competence. The detail is found in the regulations³, but in plain terms this means:

→ Knowledge of the pesticides

You will be expected to know the following specific things about the pesticides you wish to handle.

- the hazards of the pesticides and how to prevent harm to people and damage to the environment; and
- what to do in an emergency.

→ Practical experience and knowledge of the equipment you use

You will need to have sufficient experience to be able to demonstrate you are competent to handle the pesticide, the operating equipment, and know about the protective clothing and safety equipment required.

→ Knowledge of the hazardous substances legislation

You will need to know some basic facts about the HSNO Act, mainly related to enforcement issues, and what the law is trying to achieve.

- the HSNO classifications and regulations that apply to the pesticides.
- any codes of practice that apply to the pesticides.

A ‘full’ certificate is valid for five years from the date of issue.

¹ Pesticides Transitional Approved Handler Declaration www.ermanz.govt.nz/pesticides/AHdeclaration.pdf

² Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (Personnel Qualifications) Regulations 2001, Regulation 6

³ Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (Personnel Qualifications) Regulations 2001, Regulations 4 & 5

How do I convert my transitional certificate to a full certificate?

You will need to prove that you understand the specific HSNO items that were not covered by your transitional certificate, mainly your knowledge of the new HSNO legislation. You will also have to prove that you are up to date with current best practice, new codes of practice, and any new and relevant laws. You will then receive a full certificate. Full details on this will be available by mid 2005.

How do I renew a full certificate?

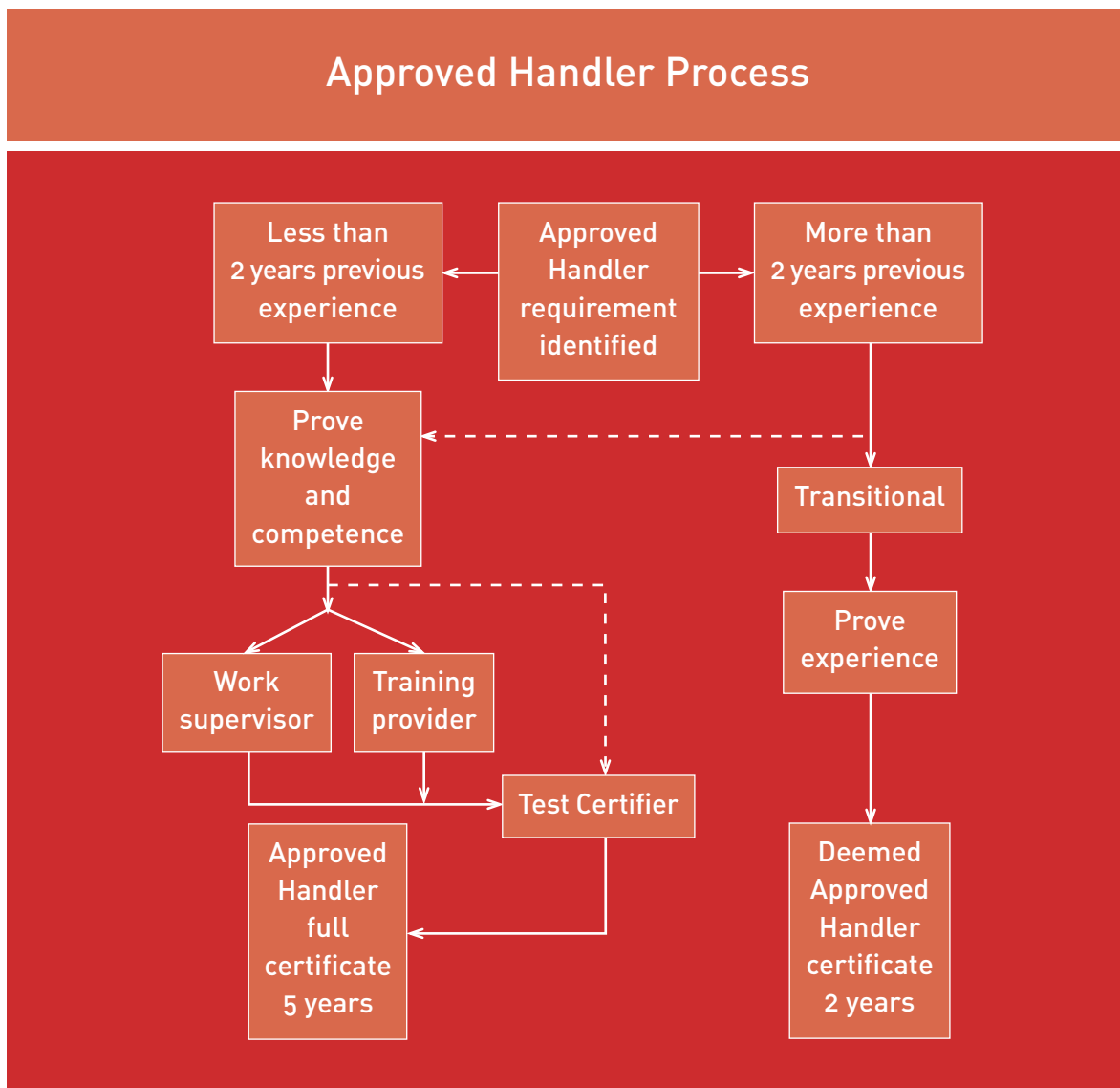
At the end of each five year period you will need to prove you are up to date with any changes to the law or codes of practice that happened in the previous five years.

How do I get the full Approved Handler certificate?

Full Approved Handler certificates are obtained from a Test Certifier. Test Certifiers are individuals approved by ERMA New Zealand to issue certificates in their area of competency.

→ The process

The diagram below shows the two ways you can become an Approved Handler.



Where do I find a Test Certifier?

A list of Test Certifiers is on the web site at www.ermanz.govt.nz/search/test-cert-reg.asp, or you can contact us and request a list be sent to you. You may select any Test Certifier from the list who is certified for the pesticides you are responsible for.

What will I have to provide to a Test Certifier?

The Test Certifier will need evidence of your qualifications in either or both of the following two ways:

- **Training providers** – if you have completed a training course that covers all or part of the requirements you can provide the qualification you gained from the course.
- **Work supervisors** – if you have been trained at work or ‘on-the-job’ a supervisor or manager from your organisation can provide the evidence for you.

Whichever way, or combination of ways you choose, the evidence you provide must describe how your knowledge and skills were assessed and the results of that assessment.

A Test Certifier may not need to see an Approved Handler applicant. In most cases an application can be handled satisfactorily by mail provided all the necessary evidence has been made available to the Test Certifier. You should discuss these requirements with your chosen Test Certifier.

Where can I get training?

There are a number of training providers who cover the hazardous substances legislation. Often this may be in conjunction with Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) or other industry groups. Some organisations who provide Approved Handler training are listed on our web site at www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/hs-comp-test-certifiers.asp#approvedhandlers

Further information

Visit our website at www.ermanz.govt.nz, contact us on 0800 376 234 (HS Compliance Line), or email pesticideinfo@ermanz.govt.nz.

Additional compliance publications including Compliance Guides and Quick Guides are available at www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/compliance-pubs.asp.

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