

BC MOE to Develop Provincial Policy for Pesticide Application by Drone

From: Integrated Pest Management Program ENV:EX <BC.IPM@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: September 21, 2026 1:53 PM
Subject: Ministry of Environment & Parks survey: Pesticide application by drone

To support provincial policy around pesticide application by drone, the Ministry of Environment and Parks (ENV) is conducting targeted engagement with subject matter experts. The purpose of the engagement is to inform you about ENV's intentions to regulate pesticide application by drone, provide specific context relevant to sectors, and to gather information on intended use patterns for pesticide application by drone. This information will help in the development of educational and promotional materials, aid implementation, and identify any potential gaps in intended uses.

You are receiving this email as an agricultural industry association in B.C.

This targeted engagement will be in the form of a survey. The link to the survey, including instructions, is at the end of this email.

Background Information

Drones are regulated federally and provincially. Federally, both Transport Canada and Health Canada are involved in pesticide application by drones. Health Canada recently introduced new federal policy that allows drone technology to be used to apply pesticides that are already approved for conventional aerial application. Of note, only products that have RPAS or aerial on label can be applied with drones; other products are not allowed to be applied with drones.

Provincially, pesticide application by drone is regulated by ENV under the Integrated Pest Management Act and Integrated Pest Management Regulation (IPMR). ENV is also responsible for the development of training and certification materials for pesticide applicators. Other uses for drones (such as pest monitoring, seeding or fertilizer application) are not regulated provincially by ENV and can be conducted if all other relevant requirements (for example, Transport Canada pilot certification) have first been obtained.

How is the Province intending to regulate drones?

Drones represent a new method of aerial pesticide application. To enable pesticide application by drone in B.C., ENV is launching a 2-phased approach. In phase 1, ENV is intending to initially regulate drones under the existing aerial provisions in the current regulatory framework. This provides a timely path for early adoption of drone technology and ENV is intending to have this ready for the 2027 spray season. In phase 2, ENV is intending to explore regulatory amendments and conduct broader engagement and address barriers that may exist under the current framework. Any

regulatory changes that may occur are expected to be in place for the 2029 spray season.

What does this mean?

Regulating drones as a new method of aerial application under the current IPMR framework has implications for what use authorization and pesticide applicator certificate are required. This will vary by use, and more information relevant to the agricultural sector is included below. However, across all sectors, the policy means that:

- All drone pilots require a pesticide applicator certificate in the appropriate training category.
- A person or company providing aerial pesticide application as a service requires a service licence.

Drone pilots will be required to obtain a pesticide applicator certificate in a new Aerial-RPAS category. This is a new category, and this will be required in addition to the federal Transport Canada Pilot Certificate. Pesticide applicator certificates in other categories, including Aerial-General, will not be acceptable for drone pilots.

We intend to offer the new Aerial-RPAS training materials and certification exam this winter to provide sufficient lead time for the 2027 spray season.

If you hire a licenced service company to do drone pesticide application, your staff do not require certification.

What these policy implications mean for the agricultural sectors:

Across all sectors, most aerial pesticide applications require a Pesticide Use Permit. However, most aerial applications on agricultural land are exempt from this requirement. This means:

- 1) Pesticide application by drone in sectors that fall under Qualifying agricultural uses are exempt from the Pesticide Use Permit requirements if using on private land.
- 2) The drone pilot will need to obtain a pesticide applicator certificate in the Aerial-RPAS category.
- 3) Anyone offering a service to apply pesticides by drone will need to obtain a pesticide service license from ENV.
- 4) For most pesticide applications by drone on public land for range activities (authorized under the Range Act), a Pesticide Use Permit will be required.

ENV will be creating more detailed guidance throughout the fall and winter. Please check back to the Drone IPM web page for future updates, including guidance and information when future certification materials become available.

Source: [WCTA – Health/Safety](#)