Ohio Recordkeeping Requirements for Agricultural Fertilizer Applications

Application records must be documented within 24 hours of the application and kept for three years by the certified applicator. Records must contain the following:

- Name of applicator and certificate holder
- Date of application (month, day, and year)
- Location of fertilizer application
- Number of acres applied
- Rate of application (e.g., pounds of fertilizer per acre)
- Total amount of fertilizer applied (weight or volume)
- Analysis of fertilizer applied (e.g., 11-52-0)
- Application method (soil injected, incorporated, surface-applied, etc.)
- Soil conditions at the time of application
- Air temperature and precipitation at time of application

◊ For surface applications only: Was the ground frozen or snow-covered (yes/no)?
- Weather forecast for the day following the application

There is no standard format required, but the records need to contain all items listed. Records need to be available to the Ohio Department of Agriculture upon request.

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Managing nutrients for cleaner water

Education is the key component of the new fertilizer certification. Farmers will receive research-based training on methods to keep nutrients in the field and available to crops.

Best management practices will be the basis of the agricultural fertilizer certification training with a focus on fertilizer applications that promotes the 4 R’s of Nitrogen Management:

- The right rate
- The right time
- The right place
- The right source

This certification requirement is in response to concern that phosphorous and nitrogen from farm fields contribute to algal blooms in Lake Erie and to the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico.

In addition to the fertilizer certification, efforts will continue across the state to reduce all nonpoint sources of excess nutrients, both in rural and urban areas.
Do I need agricultural fertilizer certification?
The certification is required if you apply fertilizer (other than manure) to more than 50 acres of agricultural production grown primarily for sale. If you hire a co-op or other custom applicator for fertilizer applications, you do not need the certification. Additionally, you must have fertilizer certification OR Ohio Livestock Manager Certification (CLM) to apply manure from any Concentrated Animal Feeding Facility (CAFF). Start-up fertilizers applied through the planter are exempt from certification.

Do I need the certification if I raise forage for my livestock? The term “agricultural production” is defined as the cultivation, primarily for sale of plants or any parts of plants. If you raise forage (e.g., hay, silage, corn) for use on your farm, you are not required to have fertilizer certification.

What records need to be kept? Records for agricultural fertilizer applications must be kept by the certified applicator. Recordkeeping requirements are listed on the back panel of this brochure and are available online at nutrienteducation.osu.edu

To become certified for agricultural fertilizer applications: Attend a 3-hour class.

1. Attend a fertilizer certification training class offered by Ohio State University Extension. A schedule of classes can be found at nutrienteducation.osu.edu or by contacting your county OSU Extension office. Most classes are held January through March.

2. Complete and sign the fertilizer certification form at the end of the training class.

3. If you have a pesticide license, you are done. If not, you will pay $30 for the fertilizer applicator certification. The invoice for the certification fee will be sent to you by the Ohio Department of Agriculture after you complete the fertilizer certification training class or pass the exam. You will need to recertify in fertilizer application every three years.

To recertify in agricultural fertilizer applications: Attend a 1-hour recertification class.

1. Attend a 1-hour recertification training offered by Ohio State University Extension before your certification expires. Otherwise, you will need to re-test. You will receive a mailing with your fertilizer recertification renewal that has a schedule of classes available, or you can visit nutrienteducation.osu.edu.

2. Complete and sign the recertification form at the end of the training class.

3. If you have a pesticide license, you are done. If not, you will pay an annual renewal fee of $30. You will need to recertify or pass the exam every three years to maintain your certificate.