



Amenity Forum

Guidance Note

Equipment Testing



Introduction

On 26th November 2016 it became mandatory for all pesticide application equipment (PAE) to be tested. The delegated body in the UK to administer the legislation is the National Sprayer Testing Scheme (NSTS).

There are various requirements depending on the type and size of equipment you operate and this is explained in more detail below.

Sprayers less than 5 years old do not require the first test until their fifth anniversary.

For sprayers with a boom width over 3 metres these are due for re-test every 3 years. Sprayers with a boom width of 3 metres and under and other application equipment, such as weed wipers and boat mounted sprayers, need a re-test every 6 years, after they are 5 years old. You can find the full list of PAE that falls into the second category by looking at Annex 4 of the National Action Plan.

Knapsack, handheld and pedestrian sprayers do not require an NSTS test but must be inspected on a regular basis by a competent person. A record should be kept of the inspection including date and any repairs made. Operators, who should now all hold the appropriate PA certificates for applying pesticides, would be qualified to carry out these inspections and a useful check sheet is available to download from the NSTS website www.nsts.org.uk

For all sprayers it is important to ensure accurate application of the pesticides being applied. The NSTS test includes checks on the accuracy of pressure gauges and nozzle output but it is also important for the operator to carry out regular calibrations on the equipment used. With best practice in mind, an NSTS test combined with regular inspections of the sprayer during the spraying season will help to ensure safe and accurate application and reduce the risk of breakdowns during operation.

Summary – Six Points for “Best Practice” equipment use

- Ensure all PAE is NSTS tested or inspected by the relevant dates
- Carry out regular calibrations on the equipment used
- Check for leaks on the sprayer regularly and repair any worn pipes before they split and become a hazard to the environment or the operator
- To help save costs carry out a self-inspection of the sprayer using the operator check sheet available prior to the NSTS test
- Consider more regular testing/inspections especially in high usage situations and applications made in more sensitive locations such as public access areas
- Check accuracy of nozzle flow rate – they must deliver plus or minus 15% of specified volume – a simple jug test only takes a few minutes

Knapsack Sprayer Checklist

[Access the checklist here](#)