

Licensing and Registration Requirements

Sanitizing and Disinfecting Services



Companies and individuals that advertise, solicit, or perform sanitizing or disinfecting services (such as COVID-19 applications) must hold a Pest Control Business License with the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) and register with the local County Agricultural Commissioner in each and every county where they do business.

Do cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting mean the same thing?

No. These terms mean different things. Cleaning physically removes dirt, germs, and other debris from a surface. Sanitizing kills germs (bacteria, viruses, microbes) on a previously cleaned surface and lowers their number to a safe level, as judged by public health standards. Disinfecting kills a greater amount and wider range of germs than sanitizing. Under California law, a “pest” is defined to include any form of virus, bacteria, or other microorganism. Disinfectants and sanitizers are antimicrobial pesticides and are regulated by DPR. Services and products that claim to control viruses or bacteria (e.g. COVID-19) are making sanitizing and disinfecting claims.

What types of services or advertising require a company to be licensed and registered for antimicrobial pesticide applications?

If a company or individual markets, advertises, solicits or performs any of the following actions or similar actions, that company must be licensed and registered.

- Providing disinfecting and/or sanitizing services, or “deep-cleaning” to control a virus (e.g. COVID-19), bacteria, or other microorganism as part of, or in addition to, their cleaning services.
- Providing disinfecting and/or sanitizing services using antimicrobial pesticides (e.g. List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID-19)). <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/about-list-n-disinfectants-coronavirus-covid-19-0>

Pest control includes, but is not limited to, the control of pests through electrostatic spraying, fogging, fumigating and spraying.

What is required to be licensed as a pest control business with DPR?

- Companies interested in obtaining DPR licensing must submit a Pest Control Business application and pay a fee.
- A company must include each main business location, along with any branch locations on the application.
- The company must have at least one individual at each location who possesses a Qualified Applicator License (QAL) with DPR in the appropriate category who will supervise all pest control operations.
- Additional information about the pest control business license is available here <https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/license/liccert.htm>

Which Qualified Applicator License (QAL) Category is Required?

The QAL must hold a license in one of the following categories:

- **Category A** (Residential, Industrial, and Institutional)-The best category for companies that offer professional cleaning and janitorial services, and those businesses that advertise and perform disinfecting and sanitizing services in addition to their cleaning work.
- **SubCategory P** (Microbial)- For companies solely performing sanitizing and disinfecting services. This category may be eliminated January 1, 2024.
- **Category K** (Health-Related)- For companies hired by a government agency working to ensure public health.

If a company has any questions about the category of license that is required, a company representative can contact LicenseMail@cdpr.ca.gov.

Additional information about the QAL is available here: https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/license/app_packets/qal.pdf

Registering with a county or counties to operate a pest control business

After receiving a Pest Control Business license from DPR, a company must register with the County Agricultural Commissioner's office in every county in which it operates. Each county has its own application process. Please check with each county to obtain more information. https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/license/county_registration_requirements.htm