

Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)
Structural Pest Inspector Requirements

Licensing questions can be directed toll free to (877) 301-4555 or license@agr.wa.gov.

Do I need to be licensed as a Structural Pest Inspector (SPI)?

- (1) Are you conducting inspections for potential or proposed real estate transactions?
- (2) Are you inspecting for or reporting on the presence or absence of any of the following?
 - termites
 - carpenter or moisture ants
 - wood infesting beetles
 - wood rot (fungus)
- (3) Are you inspecting for or reporting on damage by any wood destroying organisms?
- (4) Are you inspecting for or reporting on any of the following conditions?
 - soil in direct contact with wood
 - wooden or other conducive debris under or near the structure
 - water in a structure from poor drainage or a plumbing leak
 - failed caulk or grout at water splash areas
 - inadequate clearances such as may be found in a crawl space
 - restricted or failing gutter systems
 - inadequate ventilation causing excessive moisture in wood
 - vegetation in contact with the structure

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, YOU must be licensed as a SPI.

How do I become licensed as a SPI?

- **Determine the type of license(s) you need.** If you conduct wood destroying organism (WDO) inspections and never apply pesticides, you only need the SPI license. If you do both inspections and applications, you need the SPI license and the appropriate applicator license. Refer to the *Pesticide Licensing Fact Sheet* for further information on applicator licensing.
- **Pass the required WSDA exam(s).**
 - SPI license only - you must take the SPI exam. Study material for this exam includes the Pest Management Study Manual for Pest Control Operators (MISC0096), Wood Destroying Organism Key (EB 1814) and the Rules Relating to Wood Destroying Organisms (WAC 16-228-2005 through 2060). The first two are available from the Washington State University Bulletins Office at (800) 723-1763 or <http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/c0886/c0886.pdf>. The rules are available at <http://agr.wa.gov/PestFert/Pesticides/docs/WdoRules.pdf>.
 - SPI + applicator license - you will need to take the Laws & Safety exam and category exams in those areas you will be working. To qualify for the inspector license, you will need the PCO Structural category if conducting specific inspections or the SPI category if conducting complete inspections. Specific WDO inspections are those done for the purpose of identifying or verifying evidence of an infestation of WDOs prior to pest management activities. Complete WDO inspections are done for the purpose of determining evidence of infestation, damage, or conducive conditions as part of the transfer, exchange, or refinancing of any structure. Refer to the study manual order form for further information on study material for the Laws & Safety and PCO Structural exams. See the above bullet for information on the SPI study material.

- **Submit proof of financial coverage** or be employed by a WSDA Structural Pest Inspector Company that has provided proof of coverage. Commercial Applicators (CA) and Operators **who only perform specific WDO inspections** do not need to meet this requirement if WSDA has proof on file that the CA insurance is current.
- **Own or be employed by a business that has a SPI Company License.** The company license is required when conducting complete WDO inspections. (To obtain an application for this no-fee license, call WSDA or go to <http://agr.wa.gov/PestFert/LicensingEd/CaSpiInfo.htm>.)

What type of financial coverage is accepted for a SPI license?

As a means of protecting people who may suffer legal damages resulting from the actions of a structural pest inspector, the company an inspector owns or is employed by must provide WSDA with proof of financial coverage. The four options for financial coverage are:

- **Option 1:** \$25,000 errors and omissions insurance policy that provides coverage two years from the date of any inspection;
- **Option 2:** \$25,000 surety bond that allows suit to be brought against it for legal damages as a result of the actions of the structural pest inspector for up to two years after the inspection;
- **Option 3:** \$12,500 surety bond with the same conditions as above combined with a \$25,000 non-occurrence based errors and omissions insurance policy; and,
- **Option 4:** \$25,000 assigned account, held by the department to satisfy any judgment for legal damages resulting from errors and/or omissions in an inspection.

Proof of financial coverage must be provided on a WSDA approved form. These are available at <http://agr.wa.gov/PestFert/LicensingEd/CaSpiInfo.htm> or by contacting WSDA. Once licensed, the financial coverage must be maintained at the required level. If the SPI company fails to provide evidence of financial coverage or it falls below the required amount, all inspector licenses covered by it are automatically suspended.

What else do I need to know to legally perform structural pest inspections?

Rules governing structural pest inspections are found in Rules Relating to Wood Destroying Organisms, WAC 16-228-2005 through 16-228-2060.

All WDO inspection reports that are prepared in conjunction with the transfer, exchange, or refinancing of any structure must have an Inspection Control Number (ICN) recorded on them. The ICN should be listed in the upper right hand corner of the report's first page. Realtors, mortgage lenders, and WSDA routinely look for the ICNs on WDO reports. When you receive your license, you will be given information on obtaining ICNs, at no cost, through WSDA's toll free line. (Note: Inspection reports lacking ICNs are invalid for real estate transactions.)

Pesticide law makes it illegal to advertise that you perform WDO inspections without a SPI license. The license is only valid for conducting complete inspections if you own or are employed by a business with the SPI Company License. In addition, noncompliance with the inspection requirements can result in a civil penalty of up to \$7,500/violation.

WSDA maintains a listing of inspectors licensed to perform complete WDO inspections on its Web site at <http://agr.wa.gov/PestFert/LicensingEd/ListStructuralPestInspectors.htm>.