

MINUTES OF THE GEORGIA STRUCTURAL PEST CONTROL COMMISSION MEETING

May 20, 2025

- A. The Georgia Structural Pest Control Commission convened at 10:09 a.m. at the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area in Augusta, GA. Commission members present were Chris Gorecki; Chairman, Derrick Lastinger; Vice-Chair, Dr. Brian Forschler, Kim Bragg, Bodine Sinyard, and Dr. Thuy-Vi Nguyen.
- B. Also in attendance were representatives with the Georgia Department of Agriculture, GPCA, CPCO, registrants, and other members of the pest management industry.
- C. A motion was made by Mr. Sinyard to approve the minutes of the April meeting. Mrs. Bragg seconded the motion, and the motion passed.
- D. Dr. Forschler provided the UGA Urban Entomology Update. Dr. Sonia Altizer is now officially the new head of the entomology department. He encouraged everyone present to reach out and form a connection. He emphasized the challenges over the years of gaining recognition for the important work that the industry does.
- E. Mr. Lastinger provided the department updates. SPD recently met with EPA Region 4. Funding was discussed and while no official decision has been reached States are being advised to expect budget cuts. Funding for pesticide and chemical disposal, particularly in areas affected by Hurricane Helene may become available, but nothing has been confirmed thus far. Mr. Lastinger also discussed a recent meeting with Dr. Sonia Altizer and Commissioner Tyler J. Harper. This meeting helped to emphasize the unique partnership the GDA has with UGA and the important research work being done in Georgia. Mr. Lastinger also noted that the GDA is currently operating in a short-term deficit while we seek ways to cut spending and prepare for fiscal year 2026 with an anticipated reduced budget. He also announced that the GDA Summer Internship program officially began on May 19th, with 14 total interns for the department. The Structural Pest Division will be hosting 2 interns, Tyler Washburn and Colton Sanders. Mr. Sanders is a recent ABAC graduate who will be interning with our inspectors in the field. Mr. Washburn is finishing his master's degree at Emory in Epidemiology and will be primarily assisting SPD on the administrative side. Mr. Lastinger also noted that the eradication of the Yellow-legged Hornet remains a priority, with numerous GDA staff working on the eradication of this pest.
- F. Mr. Tim Taylor provided the Compliance Report. The SPD is currently interviewing for an open inspector position in middle GA. Inspection priorities include unlicensed operators and for-cause inspections. Mr. Taylor also discussed an ongoing case regarding employees cheating during the registered employee examination. He noted that examinees are recorded while taking the examination and that a review of the recordings confirmed the report from the exam center proctor.
- G. Mr. Lastinger discussed Notice 07-01 Examination Cheating Policy. This policy, per a recommendation from the GDA Legal division, is being considered to be formalized into rule.

- H. Ms. Ali Ikner spoke about challenges with limited resources in proctoring exams. The proctors at the testing centers may not have consistent resources available to supervise testing while also assisting with applications. Policies regarding providing assistance to examinees on incomplete or incorrectly completed applications at the time of the exam will be enforced more strictly and consistently in the future. Examinees are encouraged to arrive on time, be prepared, with proper identification, and ensure that their account was created with the correct driver's license number, name, and required information. Examinees with incomplete or incorrectly completed applications will be turned away and asked to reschedule at a later date.
- I. Ms. Ikner provided the Certification and Training update. Due to issues with our web vendor there was a delay in the launch of the 2025-2027 license renewal portal. Renewal notices are now scheduled to be sent out this evening. Companies will need to make sure they have their current liability insurance on file and must renew the DCO license either at the same time or prior to renewing the company license. She also noted that the Special Licensing Edition of The Inside Buzz featuring guides and information on the renewal process will be sent out in the morning on May 21st. As a reminder the renewal webpage is also available for anyone seeking assistance with the renewal process and will continue to be updated as needed.
- J. Mrs. LeAnna Merritt provided the Outreach report. On April 9th, SPD participated in the UGA webinar series presenting to 194 participants. The School IPM Program, which teaches elementary age students the importance of pest identification and pesticide safety, is in full swing. From April to the end of May SPD visited 7 schools and provided the pest lesson to over 600 students. SPD will also be hosting a booth and presenting the pest lesson at the upcoming Butterfly Festival, held annually at the Chattahoochee Nature Center. Mrs. Merritt also discussed the recent Clean Day held on May 13th in Johns Creek where over 10,000 pounds of chemicals were collected for safe disposal. She also discussed the recently published Notice 25-03 Monthly Job Report Fact Sheet, which is available on the SPCC Guidance Policies page.
- K. The Commission approved company applications (see attachment 2)
- L. Mr. Lastinger led the discussion on rulemaking. *As a reminder no rule changes are being formally proposed at this time. These discussions are to aid in the initial drafting of the revisions to be proposed. Once the draft is complete, the proposed rules will be posted and there will be a public comment period before rule changes are finalized.* The commission discussed the creation of a certified applicator license to comply with new EPA FIFRA definitions. If created, this license would allow registered employees to take the general portion of the Certified Operator exam to qualify to apply RUPs, thus allowing companies an optional avenue to pursue should they feel affected by a federal reclassification of a pesticide as an RUP. Certified Operators would continue to be able to apply RUPs. This would also help to provide a steppingstone (though optional) to registered employees seeking to become certified operators. This license would still be subject to experience requirements and CEU requirements. Attendees discussed aspects of this proposed license and feedback was generally positive.

- M. Mr. Lastinger spoke about the building code requirement for a termite certification. Upon review this requirement did not interfere with Georgia's pesticide preemption law, however there is potential for this requirement to conflict with existing state policy. Therefore, the department will continue to monitor and report any changes at future meetings.
- N. Mr. Gorecki led the discussion regarding the Novaterm device which was presented by Mr. Don Foster who was in attendance. The Novaterm device is advertised as a remote sensing termite bait station that utilizes AI to draw conclusions about the condition of the station and provides feedback to a PMP. Mr. Foster stated that the intent would be to market this to PMPs in Georgia, rather than as a direct-to-consumer product. Mr. Foster also emphasized that there are two versions of the product, one that uses a cellulose with no active ingredients in the station, and another version that would use an approved termiticide bait. He explained that the bait stations have sensors that measure the density of the cellulose in each device that operates on a radio frequency. According to Mr. Foster, an AI software interprets the density readings to determine if there is termite activity based on the rate of decline of density (or if it is more likely debris in station such as a rain event) and sends a cellular signal to the PMP to alert them when the stations need to be checked or serviced. Stations are also recommended to be serviced in person every 12 months. The SPCC requested that Mr. Foster provide examples of the reporting data, further data to support the AI detection method is functional, information regarding the interchangeability (or lack thereof) of 3rd party bait matrixes, the list of other states who have approved the product, and detailed information on how companies provide services in the event of detection and in the absence of detection. The SPCC also emphasized that the word "attractant" is an issue in the promotional materials and product information. It was also noted that a product not requiring registration is not the same as a product being approved, as well as the distinction of a product being approved as detection devices versus being approved as a bait station. Mr. Foster will be gathering the information requested by the SPCC for further discussion and consideration of the Novaterm device for use in Georgia. At this time it has not been approved for use in Georgia.
- O. Mr. Rick Bell provided the legislative and NPMA update. The Governors Tort Reform Bill passed and is big news here in Georgia. This bill is expected to have positive impacts for the industry. Mr. Bell also commended the GDA and the SPD for their work in improving the visibility of the department and industry with legislators. Noting that Commissioner Tyler J. Harper's work has been particularly helpful in directing more attention to the Department of Agriculture. Mr. Bell also discussed the success of the 2025 Women's Forum held in Austin, TX from May 12-14. He further discussed the Safe Shelter Standards Act which is a project expected to lead up to the Farm Bill. The Safe Shelter Standards Act seeks to set aside federal funding to be allocated to pest control services in HUD housing projects, thus allowing pest control to be considered a reimbursable expense. This Act currently has 24 cosigners and supporters of the legislation, with congressmen in position to support. The NPMA Public Policy Team continues to monitor legislation being introduced across the country.
- P. Mr. Bell announced that he will be retiring at the end of May. Mr. Gorecki and other members of the SPCC spoke about Mr. Rick Bell's numerous valuable contributions to the pest control industry. His exemplary service record and years of dedicated service will be

remembered through the positive impacts of his work that will continue on after his retirement.

Q. Mr. Gorecki expressed appreciation to all the guests in attendance, and the meeting adjourned at 11:56am.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1	Agenda
Attachment 2	Company Applications

Chris Gorecki, Chairman

Commissioner Tyler Harper, Secretary

ATTACHMENT 1



Georgia Structural Pest Control Commission

Chris Gorecki, Chairman
Derrick Lastinger, Vice-chairman
Dr. "Tiffany" Thuy-Vi Nguyen, Georgia Department of Public Health
Dr. Brian Forschler, University of Georgia
Bodine Sinyard, Adams Exterminators
Greg Holley, Zone Pest Solutions
Kim Bragg, Consumer Affairs & Protection Representative

Agenda

May 20, 2025

Welcome

Open – Chairman Gorecki

Minutes

Old Business

New Business

- a. UGA Urban Entomology Update - Dr. Brian Forschler
- b. Georgia Department of Agriculture Updates – Derrick Lastinger
 - Compliance/Enforcement – Tim Taylor
 - Certification & Training – Ali Ikner
 - Outreach – LeAnna Merritt
- c. New Company Applications – Ali Ikner
- d. License Renewal 2025-2027
- e. Rulemaking
- f. Building Codes
- g. Notice 07-01 Examination Cheating Policy
- h. Novaterm – Don Foster
- i. Legislative update – Trip Martin
- j. NPMA update – Rick Bell
- k. Certification Examination Application Review

Adjournment

ATTACHMENT 2

Company License Applications

The Commission approved the following applications:

- Buffalo Lick Bee Company, LLC – Walton County
- Vigilant Pest Solutions – Cherokee County – Name Change Only

The Commission approved the following applications pending additional information:

- Aptive Environmental, Inc – Jacksonville, FL – Pending Insurance
- Rentokil North America, Inc. dba Active Pest Control – Camden County – Pending Insurance & DCO <100 miles away confirmation – no technicians, trucks, no pesticide stored. Just an address for Google marketing.
- Highland Pest Solutions – Forsyth County – Pending Insurance
- Atlanta Wildlife Solutions LLC (HBR Company) – Forsyth County – Pending Insurance & Name
- Chill Pest Solutions LLC – Aiken, SC – Pending Insurance
- Clark's Pest Solutions LLC – Ooltewah, TN – Pending Name

The Commission did not approve the following applications:

- AB & BE – Crisfield, MD – Complete application, fill out correct application, resubmit
- Veteran Owned Services, LLC dba Mosquito Squad of Augusta – Richmond Forsyth County – Incomplete Application
- Karha Solutions LLC dba Pestmaster of Cumming – Forsyth County – Incomplete Application