

NOTICE OF INTENT
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
Office of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
Horticulture Commission

Professional and Occupational Standards and Requirements
(LAC 7:XXIX.117)

In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:950, *et seq.*, notice is hereby given that the Department of Agriculture and Forestry ("Department") and the Horticulture Commission intend to amend LAC 7:XXIX.117 to clarify that an arborist, utility arborist and landscape irrigation contractor must maintain insurance coverage while operating in their professions. Current regulation requires an arborist, utility arborist and landscape irrigation contractor to obtain insurance prior to licensure and to show proof of insurance prior to license renewal. Although the department and Horticulture Commission have consistently interpreted the current laws and rules to require continued insurance coverage, the proposed amendment expressly states the requirement and removes any confusion over the requirement for ongoing, continuous insurance coverage in these professions. In addition, the proposed rule changes the word "must" to "shall" throughout Rule 117 for consistency.

Title 7
AGRICULTURE AND ANIMALS
Part XXIX. Horticulture Commission

Chapter 1. Horticulture
§117. Professional and Occupational Standards and Requirements

A. Retail Florist

1. Professional Standards

a. All cut flowers, ornamental plants, and living or freshly cut plant materials sold or offered for sale shall be fresh, of high quality, and free from injurious insects, diseases, and other pests. No plant material of low quality and no wilted or dead plant materials may be offered for sale to the general public or sold to a consumer except when specifically requested by the consumer.

b. Floral designs, cut flowers, ornamental plants, and living or freshly cut plant materials shall be cared for in a manner that, to the extent reasonably possible, maintains their freshness and increases their longevity.

c. Coolers where floral designs, cut flowers, ornamental plants, or living or freshly cut plant materials, are kept or stored shall be clean and maintained at a temperature conducive to prolonging the freshness of the said products kept or stored in the coolers.

d. Containers holding cut flowers or living or freshly cut plant materials shall be maintained in a manner that does not adversely affect the cut flowers or plant material. Water in containers shall be changed periodically so as to remain clean at all times.

e. Floral designs shall be prepared in a good and workmanlike manner and shall satisfy the consumer's requests that are objective in nature. All reasonable efforts should be made to satisfy the consumer's requests that are subjective in nature. All floral designs shall be constructed in such a manner as to remain intact during transportation.

f. All wires, steel picks, corsage pins, and other sharp objects employed in the construction of a floral design shall be used in a manner that will maintain the integrity of the floral design while minimizing the risk of injury to any person handling the floral design.

g. Compliance with equivalent procedures and techniques set forth in James L. Johnson, William J. McKinley, Jr. and M. Buddy Benz, *Flowers: Creative Design* (San Jacinto Publishing Co. 7th ed. 2001; distributed by Texas A&M Univ. Press) will establish a rebuttable presumption of compliance by the licensee with these professional standards.

2. Requirements

a. Retail florist shops that lose their licensed florist will be granted a grace period of 90 days of operating without the services of a full-time licensed florist. This grace period shall end 90 days from that date. The purpose of this grace period is to provide the florist shop an opportunity to employ a licensed person. This grace period can only be used once in a 12-month period. Retail florist shops shall cease to engage in the profession of retail florist after the grace period has been exhausted. In the event a retail florist shop, despite reasonable prevention efforts, loses its only or only remaining regularly employed licensed retail florist, the florist shop shall replace the regularly employed licensed retail florist as soon as possible but in no event more than 90 days from the first day the retail florist shop operated without a regularly employed licensed retail florist. Notwithstanding the foregoing, no retail florist shop shall operate without a regularly licensed retail florist for more than a total of 90 days in any 12-month period that follows the first day of operation without a regularly employed licensed retail florist.

b. Retail florists may rent potted ornamental plants for special events such as weddings, conventions, trade shows, etc., if such plants are normally and customarily sold by florists and such plants do not require maintenance, other than normal watering. Plants rented by retail florists for a special event shall be rented only for the duration of that special event.

B. Landscape Architect

1. Without good cause, all designs shall make use of plant materials commonly found growing in Louisiana or which are suitable for growth in Louisiana's growing conditions.

2. Licensees shall meet the standards established by the Council of Landscape Architects Registration Board.

3. Each landscape architect shall obtain a seal of the design authorized by the commission. The seal shall be placed on all professional documents, including contracts, maps, plans, designs, drawings, specifications, estimates and reports, issued by a licensed landscape architect for use in this state.

a. The seal required shall be circular and 1 5/8 inches in diameter. The words "State of Louisiana" shall be along the top circumference and the words "Licensed Landscape Architect" shall be along the bottom circumference. The individual's name shall be placed horizontally in the center of the field with his registration number below. Letters and figures shall be as shown on the example printed herein to insure uniformity.



b. A rubber stamp facsimile, which conforms to the official design of the seal described in §117.B.3.a, may be obtained and used in place of the seal by a licensed landscape architect.

c. The licensee shall sign his or her legal name on each document and shall then affix his or her seal over that signature. The presence of one's seal over the signature on any document constitutes proof that he or she accepts all legal and professional responsibility for the work accomplished. The seal shall be used only by the licensee responsible to this commission for authorship of the documents thus identified. No person other than the licensee represented shall use or attempt to use the prescribed seal, and no unlicensed person shall be authorized to use the prescribed seal. Authorized use of the prescribed seal is an individual act whereby the licensee shall personally inscribe the seal over his or her signature. The licensee is responsible for the security of the seal when not in use.

4. All designs and specifications utilizing sod shall specify the type and class of sod to be used as provided in §115.D and accompanied by the sod classification form specified by the commission.

5. Continuing Education Requirements

a. Compliance with these continuing education requirements is necessary for a landscape architect, ("licensee"), to maintain a landscape architect license in this state.

b. The commission shall administer the continuing education requirements through a standing continuing education committee consisting of not more than two staff members and at least three licensed Louisiana landscape architects elected by mail ballot. The landscape architects on the committee will each serve a term of two years. The call for nominations and balloting for committee service will be conducted concurrent with annual balloting for members of the Louisiana Landscape Architects Selection Board.

c. A licensee shall attend, or complete an approved substitute for attendance, a minimum of 8 credit hours of continuing education within each calendar year. If more than 8 credit hours are obtained during a calendar year, a licensee may carry over a maximum of 4 credit hours from one calendar year to the next. Any credit hours carried over into a following calendar year shall apply to that year only and may not be carried forward into subsequent years. A credit hour shall contain at least 50 minutes of actual instruction or education.

d. Activities that may be approved for continuing education credits shall contain instructional or educational components. Such activities include annual professional meetings, lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences, university or college courses, in-house training, and self-directed activities. The commission's staff shall make the initial determination as to whether an activity qualifies for continuing education credit. If the commission's staff determines that an activity may not qualify, that activity request will be automatically forwarded to the continuing education committee for review and the committee's determination. Any licensee or other applicant for approval of an activity may appeal any committee rejection of an activity for continuing education credit to the commission. However, the commission retains the right to review and approve or disapprove any activity as a qualifying continuing education activity and the number of credit hours arising from such activity, even if there is no appeal. Any appeal from any decision of the commission shall be taken in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, (R.S. 49:950 et seq.).

e. A licensee shall keep all records showing attendance, or completions of an approved substitute for attendance, at continuing education activities for three years following the year in which attendance or completion was done.

f. Each licensee shall annually submit a written certification signed by the licensee that the licensee has, during that calendar year, attended, or completed an approved substitute for attendance, the number of credit hours stated in the certification. If credit hours carried over from the previous year are being used as a substitute for attendance then the certification shall state the number of carried over credit hours that are being used. The certifications shall be attached to the licensee's annual license renewal application. Any renewal application received without this certification shall not be processed for license renewal and the license fees submitted with the application shall be refunded to the licensee.

g. The commission shall cause an annual audit of licensees to be conducted. Licensees shall be selected for audit either by cross-section of licensees or by random audit. The provisions of this subsection notwithstanding, an investigation of a licensee for possible violation of these continuing education requirements may be conducted if there is reason to believe that a violation may have occurred. Licensees selected for audit will be required to provide documented proof of their having obtained the continuing education credits for the year being audited. A licensee's failure to provide documented proof of having attended, or completed an approved substitute for attendance, for each credit hours certified for the year being audited shall be a violation of this Part. In the event that a licensee provides documented proof of having attended, or undertaken an approved substitute for attendance, any credit hour certified for the year being audited and such credit hour is disallowed then the licensee shall have six months from date of notification of the disallowance to attend, or complete an approved substitute for attendance, a sufficient number of approved credit hours to make up for the disallowed credits. The credit hours attended to make up for any disallowed credit hours shall not count toward the minimum credit hours needed for any other year. Failure to timely make up for the disallowed credit hours shall be deemed a violation of this Part. An appeal from a disallowance of any credit hour may be taken as provided in Subparagraph d.

h. A licensee may submit a written request for an approved substitute for attendance or for a hardship exemption or extension of time in which to obtain the minimum credit hours for the year in which the request is made. The licensee shall detail the reason for the request, such as the benefit of any substitution, any physical disability, illness, or extenuating circumstance, and a specification of the requested substitute for attendance, including number of credit hours, course of study, etc. The licensee shall also provide any additional information asked for in consideration of the request.

C. Wholesale Florist

1. All flowers or greenery sold or offered for sale shall be fresh and of high quality. No wilted or dead plant materials may be offered for sale to persons holding the proper license or permits.

2. All nursery stock sold or offered for sale shall be fresh and of high quality and free from injurious insects, diseases, and other pests. No low quality plant materials may be offered for sale.

3. Coolers from which cut flowers or greenery are sold, or in which cut flowers or greenery are stored prior to sale, shall be kept clean at all times. Water in containers shall be changed regularly and kept clean at all times.

D. Landscape Horticulturist

1. Any nursery stock used in landscaping, leased, or sold, or offered for use in landscaping, lease, or sale, shall be of high quality and free from injurious insects, diseases, and other pests. Nursery stock which is leased shall be maintained in high quality and free from injurious insects, diseases, and other pests.

2. All plant beds shall be properly prepared and shall allow for proper drainage.

3. All recommendations and maintenance and planting practices shall incorporate sound horticultural practices.

4. All sod installed, sold, or recommended shall be classified as provided in §115.D.

5. Recommendations and maintenance and planting practices shall meet the standards outlined in *The Louisiana Manual for the Environmental Horticulture Industry* published by the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association.

6. Landscape horticulturists who prepare drawings to indicate the planting and location and arrangement of plant materials by that landscape horticulturist shall place his name, the words "Landscape Horticulturist," and his license number on each drawing prepared by him. Drawings prepared by a landscape horticulturist may be used only by that landscape horticulturist and no one else in connection with the submission of a bid proposal.

7. Licensees shall display their license at all times in a location accessible to the general public or any representative of the commission.

E. Arborist

1. Licensees may not use climbing irons in any trees which are not to be removed except as provided §117.E.3 hereof.

2. Before the commission issues an arborist's license, the person to be licensed shall first furnish to the commission the following:

a. a certificate of insurance, written by an insurance company authorized to do business in Louisiana, covering the public liability of the applicant for personal injuries and property damages, providing for not less than \$25,000 per person for personal injuries and not less than \$50,000 for property damages, both limits applicable to each separate accident, provided that the commission may waive the requirement for the stated insurance coverages for any licensed arborist who does not physically work on trees or accept responsibility for work on trees but only provides consultation with respect to work on trees. The certificate of insurance shall provide for 30 days' written notice to the commission prior to cancellation.

b. Failure to maintain the required insurance may constitute a violation of this Part.

3. When the characteristics of a tree require the use of climbing irons, the licensee may use climbing irons but only with the prior written permission of the owner of the tree.

4. Licensees shall enter into a written contract with the property owner employing him for arboricultural work, which contract shall specify the services to be performed and the sum to be paid for the services. Both parties shall receive a copy of the contract.

5. Licensees may apply pesticides only for the purposes of retarding decay or disease. See also §119.A relative to application of pesticides.

6. Licensees engaged in the feeding of trees shall follow proper fertilizer schedules and rates according to label directions. Representatives of the commission may take a sample of the nutrients applied during any tree feeding operation for the purpose of verifying its chemical analysis.

7. Licensees shall display their license at all times in a location accessible to the general public or any representative of the commission.

8. Prior to renewal of an arborist license, the licensee shall provide the commission with certifiable evidence of completion of a continuing training seminar which was previously approved by the commission.

9. Recommendations and pruning practices shall meet the standards outlined in the *Arborists' Certification Study Guide* published by the International Society of Arboriculture.

F. Nursery Stock Dealer

1. All nursery stock sold or offered for sale shall be fresh and of high quality and shall be free from injurious insects, diseases, and other pests. No low quality plant materials may be offered for sale to the general public.

2. All indoor nursery stock offered for sale shall be displayed or offered for sale under the protection of some type of covering, such as inside a building or under a carport, tent, or canopy, which will protect such plant material from exposure to sun, wind, or rain.

3. A clean source of water shall be provided at all times when plants are offered for sale.

4. Nursery stock dealers operating from a mobile unit shall not sell nursery stock within 300 feet of a place of business that holds a nursery stock dealer's permit, nursery certificate permit, horticulture service license, retail florist license or a wholesale florist license.

5. The permit holder shall display his permit at all times in a location accessible to the general public or any representative of the commission.

6. All sod sold shall be classified as provided in §115.D.

G. Cut Flower Dealer

1. All flowers or greenery offered for sale shall be fresh and of high quality. No wilted or dead plant materials may be offered for sale to the general public, save and except when specifically requested by consumer.

2. A clean source of water shall be provided for all flowers or greenery that are offered for sale. Water in containers shall be changed regularly and kept clean at all times.

3. The permit holder shall display his decal and/or permit at all times in a location accessible to the general public or any representative of the commission.

4. The restriction against a cut flower dealer locating within 300 feet of an established retail florist shall not apply to cut flower dealers in permanent locations. In addition, cut flower dealers operating from a mobile unit shall not sell cut flowers, within 300 feet of place of business that holds a cut flower dealer's permit.

H. Utility Arborist

1. Licensees may not use climbing irons in any trees which are not to be removed except in remote utility rights-of-way that are inaccessible to tree trimming equipment where no other practical means of trimming the tree is available or as provided in §117.E.3.

2. Before the commission issues a utility arborist license, the person to be licensed shall first furnish to the commission a certificate of insurance as provided in §117.E.2.

a. Failure to maintain the required insurance may constitute a violation of this Part.

3. Licensees shall make their license available to the public or any representative of the commission at all times.

4. Prior to renewal of a utility arborist license, the licensee shall provide the commission with certifiable evidence of completion of a continuing training seminar which was previously approved by the commission.

5. Recommendations and pruning practices shall meet the standards outlined in the *International Society of Arboriculture Certification Manual* and *Best Management Practices—Utility Pruning of Trees*, a publication by the International Society of Arboriculture.

I. Landscape Irrigation Contractor

1. Before the commission issues a landscape irrigation contractor license the person to be licensed shall first furnish to the commission a certificate of insurance, written by an insurance company authorized to do business in

Louisiana, covering the public liability of the applicant, as a licensee, for personal injuries and property damages. The insurance policy shall provide for not less than \$25,000 per personal injuries and not less than \$50,000 for property damages, both limits applicable to each separate accident. The certificate of insurance shall provide for 30 days' written notice to the commission prior to cancellation. The commission may, however, waive the requirement for the stated insurance coverage for any licensed landscape irrigation contractor who does not physically work on landscape irrigation systems or accept responsibility for work on landscape irrigation systems but only provides consultation or other associated services with respect to landscape irrigation systems or the work performed on such systems.

2. Failure to maintain the required insurance may constitute a violation of this Part.

3. Licensees are required to attend and complete a commission approved continuing training seminar at least once every three years. Each licensee, prior to renewal of his or her license, shall provide the commission with certifiable evidence that the licensee has timely and successfully completed such a seminar.

4. Licensed landscape irrigation contractors shall enter into a written contract with the property owner, specifying the landscape irrigation services to be performed and the sum to be paid for the services. The contract shall include the following statement: "Any complaints regarding landscape irrigation installation should be directed to the Louisiana Horticulture Commission at 225/952-8100." Both parties shall receive a copy of the contract.

5. Licensees shall display their license at all times in a location accessible to the general public or any representative of the commission.

6. The following clarifications apply to licensed landscape irrigation contractors.

a. A licensed landscape irrigation contractor is not required to have a water supply protection specialist endorsement from the State Plumbing Board in order to install an irrigation system up to the point of connecting the irrigation system to a public or private water supply system or installing a backflow prevention device.

b. A licensed landscape irrigation contractor shall also have a water supply protection specialist endorsement from the State Plumbing Board before connecting any irrigation system to a public or private water supply system or installing a backflow prevention device, pursuant to R.S. 3:3808(P)(4), (5).

c. A governing authority, such as a parish or municipality, shall issue all necessary permits, including necessary electrical permits, to a licensed landscape irrigation contractor who does not hold a water supply protection specialist endorsement for the installation of an irrigation system, except for those permits that would allow such a licensed landscape irrigation contractor to connect the irrigation system to a public or private water supply system or install a backflow prevention device.

d. A governing authority, such as a parish or municipality shall issue all necessary permits to a licensed landscape irrigation contractor who holds a water supply protection specialist endorsement from the State Plumbing Board for the installation of an irrigation system, including necessary electrical permits and those permits that would allow such a licensed landscape irrigation contractor to connect the irrigation system to a public or private water supply system or install a backflow prevention device.

e. A licensed landscape irrigation contractor who also holds a water supply protection specialist endorsement from the State Plumbing Board is required by R.S. 3:3816(6) to install backflow prevention devices in accordance with ordinances adopted by local governing authorities, such as parishes and municipalities, regulating the installation of backflow prevention devices. If a local governing authority does not have an ordinance regulating the installation of backflow prevention devices, such devices shall be installed in accordance with the requirements of Part XIV (Plumbing) of the Sanitary Code, State of Louisiana.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 3:3801, and R.S. 3:3808.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Agriculture, Horticulture Commission, LR 8:185 (April 1982), amended LR 9:410 (June 1983), LR 11:317 (April 1985), amended by the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Horticulture Commission, LR 14:8 (January 1988), LR 20:640 (June 1994), LR 27:1832 (November 2001), LR 31:1054 (May 2005), LR 32:78 (January 2006), LR 32:1010 (June 2006), LR 33:1854 (September 2007), LR 53:1228 (July 2009), LR 36:2520 (November 2010); LR 42:

Family Impact Statement

The proposed Rule does not have any known or foreseeable impact on family formation, stability, and autonomy. In particular, the proposed Rule has no known or foreseeable impact on:

(1) the stability of the family;

(2) the authority and rights of persons regarding the education and supervision of their children;

- (3) the functioning of the family;
- (4) family earnings and family budget;
- (5) the behavior and personal responsibility of children;
- (6) the ability of the family or a local government to perform the function as contained in the proposed Rule.

Poverty Impact Statement

The proposed Rule does not have any known or foreseeable impact on any child, individual or family as defined by R.S. 49:973(B). In particular, there should be no known or foreseeable effect on:

- (1) the effect on household income, assets, and financial security;
- (2) the effect on early childhood development and preschool through postsecondary education development;
- (3) the effect on employment and workforce development;
- (4) the effect on taxes and tax credits;
- (5) the effect on child and dependent care, housing, health care, nutrition, transportation, and utilities assistance.

Small Business Statement

The proposed Rule will have no adverse impact on small businesses as defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

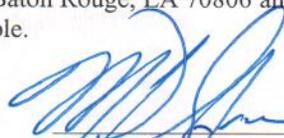
Provider Impact Statement

The proposed Rule does not have any known or foreseeable impact on providers as defined by HCR 170 of the 2014 Regular Legislative Session. In particular, there should be no known or foreseeable effect on:

- (1) the effect on the staffing level requirements or qualifications required to provide the same level of service;
- (2) the total direct and indirect effect on the cost to the providers to provide the same level of service; or
- (3) the overall effect on the ability of the provider to provide the same level of service.

Public Comments

Interested persons may submit written comments, data, opinions and arguments regarding the proposed Rule. Written submissions must be directed to Ansel Rankins, Director of the Horticulture Commission, Department of Agriculture & Forestry, 5825 Florida Blvd., Suite 3002, Baton Rouge, LA 70806 and must be received no later than 12:00 p.m. on September 6, 2016. No preamble is available.



Mike Strain, DVM
Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry