

Monday, 7 March 2011

HEFTY FINE FOR UNLICENSED PEST CONTROLLER

Meridian Pest Management Pty Ltd has been ordered to pay \$18,000 for employing an unlicensed pest controller to carry out pesticide applications in houses, after a successful prosecution by the Department of Health.

On 24 January in the Melbourne Magistrates Court the company pleaded guilty to 11 charges of permitting a person to use a pesticide in the course of the business of a pest control operator under the *Health Act 1958* (replaced by the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* on 1 January 2010).

Magistrate Reynolds fined Meridian Pest Management Pty Ltd \$12,000 for the offences and ordered the company to pay \$6,000 toward the Department's legal costs.

In sentencing, Magistrate Reynolds emphasised the serious nature of the offences and deemed it a serious oversight in the day-to-day administration of the company to not know the licence status of its employees.

Victoria's Chief Health Officer, Dr John Carnie, said laws governing the licensing of pest control operators are designed to protect the public health and wellbeing of all Victorians.

It is illegal to use pesticides for fee or reward in commercial and domestic settings without a licence issued by the Department of Health.

"This is a warning to unlicensed pest control operators who may be creating a risk for the health of the community and the environment. Individuals and companies can be prosecuted," Dr Carnie said.

"When hiring a professional pest controller to treat pests in your home or business, I encourage members of the community to check that the individual using the pesticides is licensed with the Department of Health.

"This information is available on our website (www.health.vic.gov.au/pestcontrol) or by telephoning the pest control program on 1300 887 090," Dr Carnie said.

Consumer concerns regarding the safe use of pesticides by professional pest control operators can also be directed to the pest control program on 1300 887 090 or by email to pestcontrol@health.vic.gov.au.

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