This study guide is intended to serve as an outline of the knowledge base covered by the Operator Exam. If you don’t understand a term, concept, or statement, refer to the National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Manual and the New Mexico Pest Control Act and Rules for more information.

- Know what agencies enforce federal and state pesticide law.
- Know the certification and recertification requirements for Operator/Technicians.
- What is the first step in effective pest control?
- What are the four main groups of pests?
- Know the difference between herbicides, insecticides, rodenticides, fungicides, and repellents.
- Be familiar with the parts of a pesticide label.
- Know common symptoms of pesticide exposure and heat stress.
- Know who must follow the PPE instructions on a label.
- Know the minimum recommended PPE applicators should wear.
- Know what to do in case of a pesticide spill. What should you carry in a spill kit?
- Know how to store and transport pesticides and application equipment safely and securely.
- Know labeling requirements for service containers.
- Know when and why to read the label.
- Understand use of signal words on labels such as: Caution, Danger, Danger-Poison & Warning.
- Know how to properly dispose of empty pesticide containers. What are the proper procedures for pressure-rinsing a container?
- Know requirements for completing a pesticide application record.
- Be familiar with the common types of spray equipment.
- Be familiar with common pesticide formulations, their characteristics, advantages and disadvantages.
- Know how to calculate square feet, cubic feet, as well as the amount of active ingredient and total amount of product needed according to label instructions and area measurements.
Understand the following terms:

- Pesticide
- Direct supervision
- Selective vs. nonselective
- Pesticide residue
- Integrated Pest Management
- Cultural pest control
- Preventative pest control
- Systemic vs. contact pesticides
- Pesticide resistance
- Translocation
- Mode of action
- Active vs. inert ingredients
- EPA Registration Number
- Signal Word
- Label & labeling
- MSDS
- Restricted-use pesticide
- Chronic vs. acute
- Toxicity vs. hazard
- Oral, dermal, inhalation

- Service container
- Closed systems
- Rinsate
- Compatible vs. incompatible
- Off-target drift
- Formulation
- Solution vs. suspension
- Viscosity
- Emulsion
- Photodegradation
- Microorganism
- Volatilization
- Best Management Practices
- Adsorption vs. absorption
- Sensitive areas
- Wettable powders
- Emulsifiable concentrates
- Granules
- Fumigants