



How to Become a Certified Water or Wastewater Operator

Serve your community by helping to ensure people receive safe drinking water and wastewater is discharged in an environmentally safe manner.

Eligibility

To become a certified Class A, I, II, III or IV Water Supply, Water Distribution, Wastewater Treatment or Wastewater Collection operator in the State of Ohio, you must apply for and pass the state operator certification exam and document the appropriate level of hands on work experience.

To apply for the exam, you must have a high school diploma or the equivalent, and the amount of operating experience identified in the table to the right. If you do not have the operating experience required to become certified at the Class A, Class I or II level, you may still be approved to take the exam.

If you pass the exam, you will be designated as an "operator in training" (OIT) and allowed up to 48 months to fulfill the operating experience requirement. OIT status is not available for Class III or IV certification.

Application and Fees

There are two methods for taking exams for water and wastewater certification.

Ohio EPA Exams

EPA holds Ohio EPA holds Class A, I, II, and III exams twice a year, in May and November at the Ohio Expositions Center. Applications must be saved and/or submitted through the Ohio EPA eBusiness Center by the application deadline which is ninety (90) days prior to the date of the exam. There is an examination fee of \$80 for Class A, \$105 for Class I, \$120 for Class II, \$130 for Class III and \$145 for Class IV. Applications for the traditional paper and pencil testing are available on ***Ohio EPA's Operator Certification Web site.***

Third Party Exams

Ohio EPA is pleased to offer alternative water and wastewater operator certification examinations, which are available more frequently and, in more locations, than Ohio EPA's traditional paper and pencil testing. The State of Ohio has approved the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) as an approved examination provider. Operators may now choose to take an ABC examination and then seek State of Ohio certification for all levels of certification except Class IV. To find out more about the ABC certification program, please visit ***ABC's Ohio Certification website.***

| Classification | Operating Experience |
|----------------|---|
| A* | 1040 hours |
| I | 12 months |
| II* | 36 months |
| III* | 60 months, including 12 months as a Class II operator |
| IV** | 36 months as a Class III, 24 months management experience at a Class III or IV facility |

* Reductions available for education and course completion. Contact Ohio EPA for details.
** More information about the Class IV exam can be found online at epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.aspx

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Preparing for the Exam

The operator certification website includes references used to create exam questions, need to know criteria and formulas that may help you prepare for the exam. Ohio EPA does not require completion of any coursework prior to applying for an exam. However, many people believe this helps when preparing for an exam. Ohio EPA does not offer exam study courses or practice exams. However, there are a number of training providers that do offer courses.

Operating Experience

The following indicates types of operating experience that can be used toward Ohio EPA’s experience credit requirement for certification as a water or wastewater operator. See OAC Rule 3745-7-01 for the definition of operating experience. Experience for drinking water related examinations may only be obtained at public water systems.

| Counts | Counts for a maximum of 25 percent of requirement, if job responsibilities consist solely of one or more of the following: | Doesn't Count |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Plant Operations/Maintenance. • Military experience (potable water/wastewater) (DD214 Form or JST required). • On-site investigations/inspections that require coordination of work with the active treatment processes, sewerage or distribution systems (hours must be documented). • Troubleshooting plant operations at a public water system or treatment works. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onsite SCADA system monitoring. • Industrial wastewater treatment. • Sludge handling and sludge hauling, if part of a public water system or treatment works • Laboratory work at the lab of an owner of a public water system or treatment works. • Construction inspection and engineering design that require coordination of the inspection or design with the operation of the active treatment process, sewerage or distribution systems. • Distribution or collection experience when applying for supply or treatment licenses. • Source water protection and watershed management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerical duties. • Commercial lab work. • Sludge handling and hauling, if <i>not</i> part of a treatment works. • Investigations/inspections or construction inspection/engineering design that <u>do not</u> require coordination of work with the active treatment processes, collection or distribution systems. • Academic Research. • Meter Reading only. • Off-site monitoring of SCADA. • Laborers, even at plant, if only duties are mowing grass, painting, etc. • Septage hauling. |

More Information

Visit our website at epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.aspx, email the operator certification unit at opcert@epa.state.oh.us or call our toll-free hotline at 1-866-411-OPCT (6728).