

3745-6-01

**Purpose, applicability, and available certifications.**

[Comment: For dates of non-regulatory government publications, publications of recognized organizations and associations, federal rules and federal statutory provisions referenced in this rule, see rule 3745-6-02 of the Administrative Code.]

(A) The purpose of this chapter is to establish the criteria and administrative procedures for certifying water quality professionals to conduct activities and collect data in support of applications for section 401 water quality certifications and isolated wetland permits. This includes the collection and submission of data sufficient for Ohio EPA to determine the existing aquatic life use of streams, and the submission of data sufficient for Ohio EPA to categorize wetlands, pursuant to section 6111.30 of the Revised Code.

(B) This chapter is applicable to all people seeking, holding, or seeking to renew certification under this chapter. Participation in this program is voluntary, and nothing in section 6111.30 of the Revised Code requires an applicant for a section 401 water quality certification or isolated wetland permit to use the services of a person certified under this chapter.

(C) Certifications. The following certifications may be applied for under this chapter:

(1) Stream certification. The stream certification will allow a WQCP to collect and evaluate stream habitat data and biological data using the assessment methods listed in paragraph (B)(1) of rule 3745-6-05 of the Administrative Code, and to determine if collected data is sufficient for Ohio EPA to determine the existing aquatic life use of a stream, or if an advanced stream biological assessment conducted by a level 3 qualified data collector (QDC) certified under the credible data program is required.

(2) Wetland certification. The wetland certification will allow a WQCP to collect and evaluate wetland habitat and biological data using the Ohio rapid assessment method (ORAM), listed in paragraph (B)(2) of rule 3745-6-05 of the Administrative Code, to determine if collected data is sufficient for Ohio EPA to categorize the wetland, or if an advanced wetland biological assessment conducted by an advanced wetland WQCP would be beneficial for Ohio EPA to more accurately categorize the wetland.

(3) Advanced wetland certification. The advanced wetland certification will allow a WQCP to collect advanced wetland biological data using the assessment methods listed in paragraph (B)(3) of rule 3745-6-05 of the Administrative Code for Ohio EPA to categorize wetlands.

(D) Data submitted under this program pursuant to section 6111.30 of the Revised Code is not considered credible data. For the data to be considered credible under the credible data program, the data shall be submitted in accordance with the procedures in Chapter 3745-4 of the Administrative Code.