

Commonly Asked Contact Hour Questions

1. **Is it okay to claim partial credit for a course? (Course “S296212” is approved for 9 contact hours. The course was divided into three 3-hour segments. I attended one of the 3-hour segments, can I claim 3 contact hours?)**

No, Ohio EPA does not grant partial credit for approved courses.

2. **Is it okay to attach the OTCO transcript print-out instead of completing the Course list on the back of the Renewal Application? I’ve taken OTCO courses to fulfill my contact hour requirements, Can I just attach their form?**

Yes, you can use an OTCO transcript. Just log on to their contact hour tracking link, check the appropriate boxes and hit compile. You will then be able to print out a form that looks very similar to the OEPA back page. Sign and date the form and attach it to the renewal application. **Please note:** only courses with completed, correct information will be given credit (course approval number, course name, completion date(s) of training, and number of contact hours awarded are required information fields).

3. **How and when will I know if I am being audited?**

The Applications for Operator Certification Renewal are mailed in August of each renewal year. The word **AUDIT** will appear in bold at the top of the front and back page and paragraph #2 states, “You have been randomly selected to be audited.” If you are audited, copies of certificates of completion, transcripts, etc. should be mailed with the renewal fee. **Please note:** Carbon copies of session attendance sheets must be signed by an on-site training coordinator for the workshop in order to be used as a proof of attendance.

4. **The renewal application asks us to list the course approval number; how do I find an approval number?**

In order to obtain a course approval number, contact the training provider directly, or check our Web site: <http://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.aspx> under the Renewal and Contact Hour Course Information heading. There are separate lists maintained for those courses approved for water contact hours, wastewater contact hours, and post attendance contact hour applications. **Please note:** Courses approved by Approved Contact Hour Training Providers are not listed on our Web site. You must contact those training

providers directly for approval numbers of courses which they have approved.

5. How do I know if a course is approved for water or wastewater?

For courses beginning with "OEPA":

"D" prefix is approved for water.

"S" prefix is approved for wastewater.

"B" prefix is approved for both water and wastewater.

"G" prefix is a Post-attendance course approval.

For all other course approval numbers, contact the training provider directly.

6. My certificate will expire December 31st. I hear I am supposed to have half of my contact hours in Operations and Maintenance. Is this true? How do I know I am taking the right courses?

At least half of an operator's contact hours must be those courses directly related to operations and maintenance of a facility. The approved course list located on our website will display a modified course approval number stating a course's designation as Operations and Maintenance "OM" (OEPA-D265987-OM) or Other "X" (OEPA-D265988-X).

7. My certificate will expire December 31st of this year. I took course B407, LockOut/TagOut last year and again this year. Can I use the course twice for my renewal?

No, you may not use a course twice on the same renewal form. However, if you have taken a course twice within the same renewal period and you have two different certifications, you may use the course once for each certification.

8. What if I don't have enough contact hours by my expiration date in December?

You have a one-year grace period to complete contact hours, however, **your certification is considered expired and you should not be acting as the operator of record.** Renewal applications without contact hours will not be accepted. A \$20 late penalty applies to ALL certificates being renewed after January 31st.

9. If I take a class and it's approved for eight hours for both water and wastewater, can I put eight hours towards my water certificate and eight hours towards my wastewater certificate?

No, the class counts for eight hours, not sixteen hours. However, you can split the eight total hours between certificates. In order to do this you must indicate this on the completed contact hour course list form on the back of your renewal application.

10. How many contact hours do I need?

Water and Wastewater Certificate Level	Contact Hours Required for Renewal
Limited Class A Class A	8
Class I ALL Distribution ALL Collection	12
Class II Class III Class IV	24

Please note: Operators who hold more than one active certificate shall have the number of contact hours required for the renewal of each certificate reduced by 25%. All 8 hour requirements will be reduced to 6 hours, all 12 hour requirements will be reduced to 9 hours, and all 24 hour requirements will be reduced to 18 hours.

11. How do I know how many contact hours I have completed? Who has a record of this information?

Ohio EPA does not maintain earned contact hour records for individual operators. It is the responsibility of the certified operator to maintain all course attendance materials and earned contact hour records. Training providers are required to maintain attendance records for all of their training events for a period of three years from the date of training. If you need a copy of completion certificates or other attendance verification, contact the training provider directly.

- 12. If I have a Water Supply Class II certificate that I renewed in December 2009 and I pass the Class III exam in November 2010, can I use the contact hours I earned before I passed the exam to renew my Class III renewal in 2012?**

No. Contact hours earned for previous certificates may not be credited towards future certificates. Only contact hours earned during the year of expiration and one-year prior, will count.

- For 2010 renewals, only courses taken in 2009 and 2010 will count; contact hours taken in 2008 will not count.
- For 2011 renewals, only courses taken in 2010 and 2011 will count; contact hours taken in 2009 will not count.
- For 2012 renewals, only courses taken in 2011 and 2012 will count; contact hours taken in 2010 will not count.

Contact hours will only be credited toward the certificate(s) held at the time of course completion.

- 13. How many contact hours are given for 1.0 CEU of credit? Are all CEU approved courses approved for contact hours too?**

One CEU credit *may equal a maximum* of ten contact hours. CEU courses are *not always approved* for contact hours. Training providers must submit them for approval. Contact the training provider before attending courses in question to be sure they have been approved by Ohio EPA for contact hour credit.

- 14. I am having a hard time getting my contact hours. Is there an easy way for me to get training at home?**

Yes. We post a list of training providers offering correspondence, on-line, and CD courses on our Web site at:

[http://epa.ohio.gov/portals/28/documents/opcert/Internet and Correspondence training providers.pdf](http://epa.ohio.gov/portals/28/documents/opcert/Internet_and_Correspondence_training_providers.pdf). Some of these providers require a small fee and others are free.