



How to Become a Certified Water or Wastewater Operator

Serve your community by helping 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. The types of experience that can be counted are listed on the second page of this fact sheet.

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.

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 may be 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

Application and Fees

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

Ohio EPA Exams

Ohio EPA holds paper and pencil exams twice a year, in May and November at the Ohio Expositions Center. Applications must be postmarked ninety (90) days prior to the date of the exam. There is an exam fee of \$80 for Class A, \$105 for Class I, \$120 for Class II, and \$130 for Class III. Class IV examinations have an application fee of \$145 and are written essay examinations. Announcements and information regarding all of the examinations can be found on the front page of the Operator Certification webpage at epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.aspx.

Third Party Exams

The Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) has been approved by Ohio EPA to provide the Class A through Class III exams in multiple locations throughout the state. These exams are computerized and can be scheduled by the examinee. The exams are given at ABC approved testing centers in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Toledo. An examination can be scheduled by visiting ABC's website at www.abccert.org/Ohio_EPA/certification_process.asp. ABC offers two pathways toward Ohio EPA certification. Information regarding these pathways and the fees for those exams can be found on the ABC website.

Once a prospective operator has passed the ABC examination and met the appropriate experience requirements, they can submit an application for certification and a non-refundable \$45 application fee. If a review of the application determines the prospective operator meets the criteria required to be certified, Ohio EPA will issue a certificate with the appropriate field and classification.

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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 as Operating Experience

- Daily Plant Operations/Maintenance
- Laboratory work at the lab of an owner of a public water system or treatment works
- Military experience (potable water/wastewater)
- On-site investigations/inspections or construction inspection/engineering design 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
- Industrial wastewater treatment
- Onsite SCADA system monitoring, sludge handling and sludge hauling if part of a public water system or treatment works will count for no more than 25 percent of the total experience required

Does Not Count as Operating Experience

- Clerical duties
- Commercial lab work
- Sludge handling and hauling if not part of a treatment works
- Investigations/inspections or construction inspection/engineering design that do not 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

For 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).