



## **Commonly Asked Questions for Contact Hours and Certification Renewal Applications**

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14. My certificate will expire December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. I took course B407, LockOut/TagOut last year and again this year. Can I use the course twice for my renewal?
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16. 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?
17. How many contact hours do I need?
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19. If I have a Class II Water Supply certificate that I am supposed to renew in December 2021 and I pass the Class III exam in November 2021, can I use the contact hours I earned before I passed the exam to renew my Class III renewal in 2023?
20. How many contact hours are given for 1.0 Continuing Education Unit (CEU) of credit? Are all CEU approved courses approved for contact hours too?
21. I am having a hard time getting my contact hours. Is there an easy way for me to get training at home?
22. I am an instructor who taught an approved course for a training provider. Can I take that course approval number and go teach this course any place I want? Can I teach it for another training provider?
23. I am renewing two certificates this year. Can I write one check for both renewals?
24. I am a current member of a professional Water/Wastewater organization. I heard I can use this membership for 1.0 contact hour on my renewal. Is this true?
25. I have taken a course that is not already approved and would like to obtain credit for it. How do I obtain approval for the course?
26. I am the Operator of Record and I renew this year. It is nearing December 31<sup>st</sup> and I do not have a valid renewal card in hand.
27. I renewed online but I have not received my renewal card in the mail.

**1. Do I have to submit my renewal application online?**

Yes. All renewal applications are required to be submitted online through the eBusiness Center. Step-by-step instructions on how to renew online is located [here](#).

**2. I tried to access my eBusiness Center account but it won't let me log in?**

In November 2020, access to the eBusiness Center was only made available through the State of Ohio's OHID portal. All eBusiness Center users must have an OHID account to access their eBusiness Center accounts. A step-by-step instruction guide is located below:

<https://epa.ohio.gov/static/Portals/47/facts/OHIDStepbyStepInst.pdf>

**The email address you use to create your OHID account must match your eBusiness Center account email address.** This is the only way for the OHID portal to locate and link your eBusiness account data. If you have questions about creating an OHID account, please contact the Ohio EPA eBiz Help Desk at [ebizhelpdesk@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:ebizhelpdesk@epa.ohio.gov) or (877) 372-2499.

**3. When can I submit my renewal application?**

Renewal applications may be submitted beginning August 1<sup>st</sup> of the renewal year. If your expiration date is December 31, 20xx, you can submit a renewal application beginning at 12:01 AM August 1, 20xx.

**4. In the eBusiness Center, what do the columns Hours Available and Hours Applied mean?**

The hours available column indicates the number of hours that are potentially available to an operator to be used on a renewal application. The hours available column does not necessarily mean the hours will be available on your current or upcoming renewal application. In order for these hours to be available, they must be relevant to the certificate and have been obtained in the 2 years prior to the renewal deadline. The hours applied column indicates the number of hours from a course that have already been used on a renewal application. Ensure you verify that the course is within the proper date range and is approved for the appropriate certification. Once the blue renewal button is active for your certificate, you can click the blue renew button and see the actual courses that can be used for your certificate.

**5. I want to renew online, but I do not see all my contact hours listed. Why aren't they there?**

Training providers are required to upload attendance within 60 days of the course taking place. If your courses are not showing up in the eBusiness Center, we recommend you contact your training provider to find out if or when they will be uploading attendance. As a last resort, you can follow the instructions at this [link](#) to add the courses. Please make sure that this is a last resort because manually uploading your own hours will create errors for the training provider when they try to upload attendance.

6. **I'd like to add my contact hours to my account that training providers have not uploaded, but I do not see the [renew](#) button next to my certification.**

You must wait until after August 1<sup>st</sup> of the year you are due to renew prior to accessing the renewal application. After this date, you can add any approved course that a training provider had not uploaded, though it is strongly recommended that you wait until the training providers uploads attendance.

7. **When I try to look up a course I get an error. What am I doing wrong?**

Make sure that you are entering the entire course approval number in the appropriate format: i.e. OEPA-B1234567-OM. You must enter the entire approval number. If you still cannot find the approval number, contact the training provider to ensure the approval number is correct.

8. **When I attempt to add a course, I cannot find the correct course date in the drop-down menu. What do I do?**

Please contact the training provider directly and ensure the training provider has properly informed Ohio EPA about the training date. Training providers are required to schedule course dates either prior to or within 30 days of the course completion date. If the training provider has not done so, the training event is not approved even if the course is an approved course. Do not add a course with the incorrect course date. This could be considered falsification.

9. **If course "OEPA-S559804-X" is approved for 12 contact hours and the course was divided into four, 3-hour segments. Can I attend one 3-hour session and claim 3 hours under that number.**

No, Ohio EPA does not grant partial credit for approved courses. You must attend the entire time to use that course approval number and any contact hours from the course.

10. **If course "OEPA-B1111111-OM" is approved for 12 contact hours can I split those hours between by Water and Wastewater certificates?**

Yes, you can split the hours between a course designate as "B" between a water and wastewater certificate. Once you have clicked the blue "renew" button you can pick the number of hours you would like to apply to the renewal.

11. **The renewal application asks us to add 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 you can look through our lists of approved courses on the operator certification website. There are separate lists maintained for those courses approved for water contact hours and wastewater contact hours.

[List of water contact hours](#)

[List of wastewater contact hours](#)

**12. 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.

**13. My certificate will expire December 31<sup>st</sup>. I hear I am supposed to have half of my contact hours in "OM" 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 courses directly related to operations and maintenance (OM) of a facility, more than half, or all "OM" is also acceptable. There is no minimum requirement for "X" contact hours. The course approval number states the course's designation as Operations and Maintenance "OM" (OEPA-D265987-**OM**) or Other "X" (OEPA-D265988-**X**).

**14. My certificate will expire December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. I took course OEPA-B407-X, 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 application; however, if you have taken a coursetwice within the same renewal period and you have two different certifications, you may use the course once for each certification.

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

You have a six-month grace period to submit a complete renewal application; however, **your certification expires on December 31 of your renewal year and after that date, you are prohibited from acting as a professional operator and/or a professional operator of record until your certificate is renewed.** Renewal applications without contact hours cannot be submitted through the eBusiness Center. A \$20 late penalty will be applied to all renewal applications submitted after January 30<sup>th</sup>. If you do not renew your certificate by June 30<sup>th</sup> of the year after your renewal date, your certificate will be invalid and you will need to retake an examination in order to be certified.

**16. 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 a total of eight hours; however, you can split the eight hours between certificates. In order to do this you must indicate this when filling out the renewal application in the eBusiness Center. You will only enter the number of hours you wish to use under the "Hours Applied" column.

**17. How many contact hours do I need?**

Certification Type	Certification Class	Number of Contact Hours Required	Hours Required if <u>Holding Multiple Certificates</u>
Wastewater Treatment Water Supply	A	8	6
	1	12	9
	2	24	18
	3	24	18
	4	24	18
Wastewater Collection Water Distribution	1	12	9
	2	12	9

**Please note: at least** 50% of the hours must be Operation and Maintenance (OM) hours. Professional operators who hold more than one active certificates shall have the number of contact hours required for the renewal of each certificate reduced by 25%. The eBusiness Center renewal application will account for this reduction should you have 2 or more active certificates in the system.

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

Training providers are required to upload attendance records to the eBusiness center. Your operator account on the eBusiness center will reflect course attendance that has been uploaded by training providers. However, it is the responsibility of the professional 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.

**19. If I have a Class II Water Supply certificate that I am supposed to renew in December 2021 and I pass the Class III exam in November 2021, can I use the contact hours I earned before I passed the exam to renew my Class III renewal in 2023?**

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 2021 renewals, only courses taken in 2020 and 2021 will count; contact hours taken in 2019 will not count.

- For 2022 renewals, only courses taken in 2021 and 2022 will count; contact hours taken in 2020 will not count.

**20. How many contact hours are given for 1.0 Continuing Education Unit (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.

**21. 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 and on-line courses on our Web site at: [https://epa.ohio.gov/static/Portals/28/documents/opcert/Internet\\_and\\_Correspondence\\_training.pdf](https://epa.ohio.gov/static/Portals/28/documents/opcert/Internet_and_Correspondence_training.pdf). Some of these providers require a small fee and others are free. Contact the training provider directly for course cost and registration information. This list is not a complete list.

**22. I am an instructor who taught an approved course for a training provider. Can I take that course approval number and go teach this course any place I want? Can I teach it for another training provider?**

No. Course approval numbers are only issued to the training provider that applies for the course. Course approval numbers are NOT issued to individual instructors. Approval numbers are not for use by the instructor's employer, unless the instructor's employer is the training provider who applied for course approval. Instructors who wish to give their same course again at a different place, for a different training provider, can only do so if the new training provider has applied for and been approved to use the course. The training provider will not receive the same approval number for the course.

**23. I am renewing two certificates this year. Can I write one check for both renewals?**

Yes. You must include **both** Revenue ID numbers on the check in order to receive payment credit for both renewal fees. If you are including any late renewal fees in that check amount, please include a note attached to the check clearly indicating which Revenue ID number(s) the additional fees should go to. If you are paying online, you may pay both with one transaction. To do so, please utilize the "Pay Ohio EPA Fees Online" service on the eBusiness Center home page. **Online payments are the easiest and quickest method to pay any Operator Certification fee.**

**24. I am a current member of a professional Water/Wastewater organization. I heard I can use this membership for 1.0 contact hour on my renewal. Is this true?**

Yes. Current members of a National or Ohio organization such as WEF, AWWA, OAWWA, OWEA, and ORWA may add a copy of their Personal, Individual Membership card for 1.0 "X" contact hour on

their online renewal application. Credit **WILL NOT** be given for an Employer's membership even if you work for that employer. To add the course online use the following approval number to attach a copy of your membership card: OEPA-B398593-X.

**25. I have taken a course that is not already approved and would like to obtain credit for it. How do I obtain approval for the course?**

Contact Hour Course Applications are time sensitive and must be received within 30 days of course completion. If the training provider is not submitting a course approval application, then the operator can submit an application online. If you want to submit a course approval application, please follow the following instructions:

<https://epa.ohio.gov/static/Portals/28/documents/opcert/Operators Applying for Course.pdf>.

**26. I am the Operator of Record and I renew this year. It is nearing December 31st and I do not have a valid renewal card in hand.**

All renewal applications are due on November 30th to allow Ohio EPA time to process the 5,000+ applications that are submitted each year. In order to fulfill your requirements as the Operator of Record, you must submit your completed renewal application in advance of this date. At a minimum, we must receive your completed certification renewal application through the eBusiness Center by December 31st of your renewal year. All certificates expire on January 1st. Operators whose certificates are not renewed by December 31st of their renewal year may NOT act as the Operator of Record until their application is processed and approved.

**27. I renewed online but I have not received my renewal card in the mail.**

All renewal cards are sent to the operator by email and can also be found in the operator's eBusiness Account. The email will be auto generated and sent to the email located in the Operator's profile. There is no way to resend this email so make sure your email is up to date. If you miss the email you can still access the renewal card in the eBusiness Center account. The renewal card will be located to the right of the valid certificate, under the action column as a PDF.