

WATER AND WASTEWATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

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Program

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP)

Water North Coalition Meeting

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Topics Discussed

- ***Administration – Current Yearly Certification Schedule***
- ***Operator Guidelines***
- ***Certification Requirements for Level I to Level IV***
- ***Exams***
- ***Renewals***
- ***Education/Training (Continuing Education Units – CEU's)***

Program became mandatory in 1982 to protect public health and the environment

- All Municipal Water and Wastewater facilities/systems were and continue to be classified (Level I to IV)
 - Sophistication of treatment facility (AEP has table of values assigned to treatment methods)
 - Population serving the WD and WWC systems

Based on the Level of facility or system – Approvals and Registrations outline the number and specific level (s) of certified operator required to operate

Administration

- **Program is administered by Provincial Programs Branch – Operations Division – Drinking Water and Wastewater Section – *Certification Section***
 - **Office is located in Edmonton**
- **Jeff Charrois, PhD - is Manager of Drinking Water and Wastewater Section**
- ***Certification Section* – two of us in section – Vernice Bello – Certification Coordinator and myself - Team Lead**
- **Currently ~2551 certified operators in AB**
- **Certification Advisory Committee (CAC)**

Administration

Current Yearly Certification Schedule

- There are three exams writing a year currently – March (AWWOA conference), end of May, November
- Applications are due January 20, April 10, and September 20 of each year
- All applications are verified and approved by the CAC, which meet three times a year as well - *usually 2 weeks after application deadline*
- Once applications are approved, the applicant is notified with a time and location of exam sitting (try to have them out three weeks prior to writing)
- Renewal notices are sent out August 1 each year, all certificates expire on December 31

Guidelines

- **Established requirements for obtaining and maintaining certification – developing since 1975 – have changed over time to keep up with updated industry practices and to streamline with the rest of Canadian provinces – Agreement on Internal Trade**
- **Current version on-line - anyone who owns/operates a W or WW facility or system should become familiar with requirements to ensure compliance with their Provincial Approval or Registration**

Certification Requirements

Level I *****Everyone starts at level I**

- **12 months work experience – operating under an approval or registration**
- **Grade 12 or Equivalent**
- **ELT**

Level II

- **3 years operating experience**
- **can substitute 1 year of experience for 1 year W and WW related post secondary education**

Certification Requirements

Level III

- **Minimum 4 years operating experience (2 of those years must be in a Class II or III facility)**
- **2 years post secondary education or 90 CEU's**
- **2 Years DRC – DRC only starts after Level II**

Level IV

- **Minimum of 5 years operating experience (3 of those years must be in class III or IV facility)**
- **4 years post secondary education or 180 CEU's**
- **3 Years DRC – DRC only starts after Level II and you require 1 additional year of DRC after obtaining Level III**

Exams

- **AEP uses the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) as our exam contract provider out of Iowa, USA (as does 10 other Canadian Provinces and territories)**
- **Modular exams in Alberta for Level I and Level II – max of 2 hours regardless of how many modules you are writing**
- **Pencil and paper exams right now – hoping to move to on-line in the next couple of years**

Renewals

With Current Experience

An operator must obtain a minimum of twelve months of operating experience in the previous three years and must obtain an appropriate number of CEUs during the three–year renewal period.

Without Current Experience

**Option #2 can only be used a maximum of two consecutive times.*

If an operator does not have current experience, there are two options to choose from:

Continuing education: An operator must obtain a minimum of double their required CEU's during the three–year renewal period.

or

Re-examination: An operator may re-write the certification exam at the appropriate category and level. The rewrite must be in November of last year of renewal.

Education/Training

- **Post Secondary Education – certificate, diploma, degree - related to water and wastewater operations (1 years is equal to 45 CEU's).**
- **Continuing Education Units (CEU's – 10 contact hours is worth 1.0 CEU)**
- **Approved CEU's List**
- **Application for CEU Evaluation**

Upcoming Initiatives

- **On-line exams phased in over the next two years**
 - **Benefits**
 - **30 Days to schedule your exam writing**
 - **Results within 48 hours**
 - **Can re-schedule**

- **WE KNOW THERE IS A NEED FOR AN INTERACTIVE WEB APPLICATION FOR THE OPERATORS**
 - **Not there yet, but is has been identified**

QUESTIONS?????