

ALBERTA WATER & WASTEWATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Why do I need a Water or Wastewater Operator Certificate of Qualification?

The *Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA)* requires that specified water and wastewater facilities in the Province of Alberta have certified operators to supervise and/or carry out day-to-day operations. The approval or registration document for each facility will specify the certified operator requirements.

When did Certification in Alberta start?

In 1975, a voluntary Certification Program was started in Alberta. In February 1982, the Clean Water (Municipal Plants) Regulations were amended to require the day-to-day operation of all municipal plants be supervised by one or more certified operators. Hence, in 1983, the first mandatory certification program in Canada came into effect. In 1993 when EPEA was proclaimed, certified operators became a requirement for waterworks systems, which include water treatment plants and water distribution systems. As well, wastewater facilities required certified operators not only in the treatment plants, but the wastewater collection systems. On January 1, 2005, new certification requirements came into effect.

How do I become certified?

Certified operators in Alberta have taken many different paths to become certified. There is no one specific course or training that anyone can take to become certified. The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology does offer a 1-year fulltime Water and Wastewater Technician Program that is recognized as approved training. However, completion of the NAIT Water and Wastewater Technician Program is neither mandatory nor does taking it certify you. There are 5 levels of certification:

- ❖ Small Systems
- ❖ Level I
- ❖ Level II
- ❖ Level III
- ❖ Level IV

Each level of certification has different education, training, experience and examination requirements. Information on each level of certification can be found in the Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Guidelines at:

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/water/DWQ/certification.html>

Where do I find information on the Mandatory Entry Level Training Requirement?

The Alberta Water and Wastewater Operators Association (AWWOA) offers both the Level I Certification Preparation Course and the Entry Level Training Course. Successful completion of either one of these courses will fulfill the mandatory entry-level training component of Level I Certification. The AWWOA also offers the Small Systems training that fulfills the training component of small systems certification. Information on the AWWOA Training Program can be found at:

www.awwoa.ab.ca

or 1-877-454-7745 (toll free), (780) 454-7745 (Edmonton local)

How much does it cost to become certified?

Although there is currently no charge to write the certification exams, there are fees associated with the entry level training courses. To find out the current costs of the courses please contact the AWWOA directly.

Where can I find an application for certification?

You can find copies of the various applications for certification either on the government certification website or the AWWOA website. The AWWOA makes them available as a courtesy to their members.

I can't find a copy of my high school diploma, now what do I do?

If you completed high school in Alberta, Alberta Learning will provide High School transcripts. Please contact the Transcript Office of Alberta Learning at: Phone: (780) 427-5732. For toll-free access within Alberta, first dial 310-0000, or check out the Alberta Learning website at:

<http://www.education.gov.ab.ca>

If you completed your high school in another province or state, contact the local department of education to find out how to get a copy. Transcripts submitted with applications for certification **MUST** show completion of grade 12. If you obtained your education from outside Canada, you can find information on how to get your education evaluated at:

<http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/igas/igas.asp>

Applications for Level I Certification **will not be accepted** without verification of **completion** of Grade 12.

I did not finish Grade 12. Does that mean I can never become certified?

If you did not complete grade 12 you can obtain either a High School Equivalency Diploma or a General Educational Development Diploma. Alberta Environment recognizes both of these Diplomas as "equivalencies" for Grade 12. Please contact Alberta Learning for more information.

If I failed my certification exam when can I rewrite and what do I need to do to request a rewrite?

A candidate who is unsuccessful in an examination may, on request, rewrite the exam at least 6 months, but not more than 1 year after the unsuccessful attempt. A candidate is eligible for a maximum of two rewrites following the initial attempt.

You do not need to fill out another application for certification for your second or third attempt at the exam (you must submit a written request to rewrite including when and where you wish to write). Should a candidate be unsuccessful in their third attempt at an exam, they must submit a complete new application showing the acquisition of at least 5 relevant Continuing Education Units (CEU's) since the last certification exam attempt.

How do I renew my certification?

Effective January 1, 2005, new rules concerning the renewal of operator certificates came into effect.

Certificates must be renewed every three years to ensure that the individual continues to meet Certification Program requirements in a fashion satisfactory to Alberta Environment.

Renewal application forms will be sent to operators well in advance of the renewal date. A certified operator must complete the renewal forms and return them to Alberta Environment.

Failure to renew certification will result in the certificate becoming inactivated. A complete list of the requirements for renewal of certification can be found in the Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Guidelines.

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/water/DWQ/certification.html>

A complete list of all courses/training that have been approved for CEUs can also be found at the website listed above.

Who keeps track of the training I have taken?

It is the responsibility of the **certified operator** to keep track of their training, CEUs, etc. Remember this is *YOUR* certification. Each operator is responsible for maintaining proof of completion of their continuous education requirements and submitting the required documentation when applying for certification or renewal.

For more information on the Alberta Water & Wastewater Operator Certification Program please contact:

Kathy Abramowski, Certification Program Coordinator at: (780) 427-7713

Email inquiries can be sent to: WasteAndWater.Certification@gov.ab.ca