

A Challenging and Rewarding Job

Water and wastewater operators serve their communities by helping to ensure the safety of our drinking water and protecting the natural environment. Drinking water and wastewater industries can be considered among the most important in the world, as no one can live without clean water.

It takes knowledgeable, conscientious people to deliver clean, potable water and to ensure that wastewater is discharged in an environmentally safe manner. People who enjoy manual work and have an interest in biology, chemistry, and mathematics are well suited for the job.

Operators wear many hats and no two days are the same. One day they may be repairing a leak in the water line, operating disinfection equipment, welding pipe and fixing a pump. On another day, they may be interpreting laboratory samples for pathogens and reporting their findings to their managers or the public.

To enter the operating profession, individuals must become certified. The Operator-in-Training certificate is the first step in becoming a certified operator. Through the accumulation of experience, knowledge and training, an operator can advance to Class I to IV.



What you need to become certified as an Operator-in-Training (OIT)

An OIT certificate is valid for 3 years. The minimum requirements to obtain an OIT certificate are:

- High school diploma (OSSD) or equivalent
- Pass the OIT examination

To learn more about becoming an OIT including registering for an exam and accessing program forms and guidance, visit www.owwco.ca (Ontario Water Wastewater Certification Office). If you have any questions, contact them at info@owwco.ca or 416-231-2100 (toll free 1-877-231-2122).



Gaining Experience

Students who hold an OIT certificate can gain operational experience from summer jobs or internships at local water and wastewater facilities. This experience can help students determine if this would be a good career choice for them, and may be used toward meeting the one-year experience requirement for a Class 1 certificate or licence.

Advancing to a Class 1 Certificate/Licence



After working as an OIT and gaining operational experience, an OIT is eligible for a Class 1 certificate or licence if they meet the following criteria:

For Wastewater:

- Have one year of operational experience as an OIT
- Pass the applicable Class 1 examination

For Drinking Water:

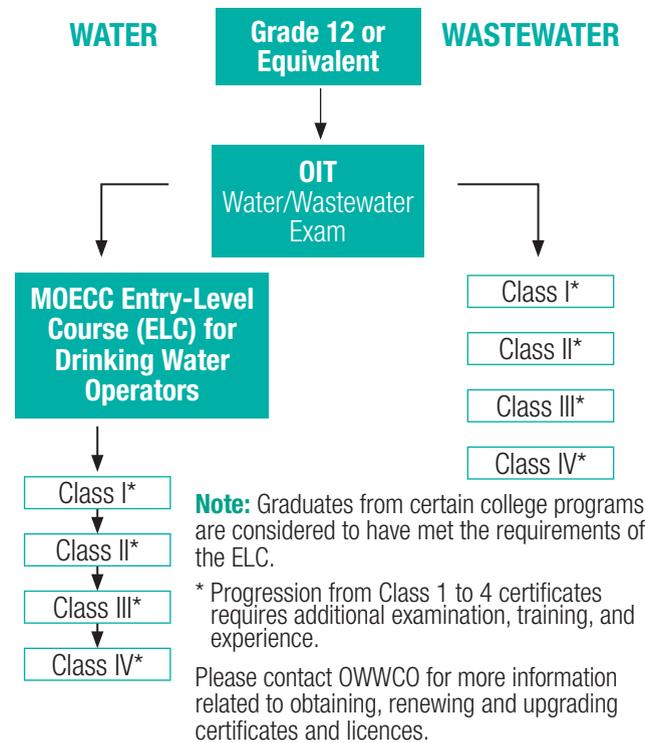
- Complete the mandatory Entry Level Course for Drinking Water Operators (see below)
- Have one year of operational experience as an OIT
- Pass the applicable Class 1 examination

Entry-Level Course for Drinking Water Operators (ELC)

To be eligible for a Class 1 drinking water certificate, OITs must complete the ELC. It is a mandatory course developed by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC), and addresses subject matter that should be known by an entry-level operator. The course is available to any individual wishing to pursue a career in drinking water treatment or distribution. It is offered through the Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC).

The ELC is also incorporated into the curriculums of several environmental and technical programs at Ontario colleges. Students who are enrolled in these programs can complete the ELC as part of their college classwork.

For information about the ELC, visit www.wcwc.ca (Walkerton Clean Water Centre). If you have any questions, contact them at inquiry@wcwc.ca or 519-881-2003 (toll free 1-866-515-0550).



Regulations

Drinking Water operators are certified under the Certification of Drinking Water Operators and Water Quality Analysts Regulation (O. Reg. 128/04) of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Wastewater operators are licensed under the Licensing of Sewage Works Operators Regulation (O. Reg. 129/04) of the Ontario Water Resources Act.

Opportunity

“It’s been estimated that almost 50% of today’s water and wastewater operators will retire within the next five to seven years. They’ll need to be replaced. Because qualified operators are expected to be in short supply, those with ambition may see more opportunities for advancement, a choice of locations and utility size, work schedule flexibility, employer-supported training, and negotiable wages and benefits.”

– The American Water Works Association

A Student’s Guide to Drinking Water and Wastewater Operator Certification

