

Operator Certification Bulletin | Fall 2015

Drinking Water and Wastewater Operator Certification News

For more news or information please visit
www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/drinking-water or www.owwco.ca

What's Coming Up



Changes to Operator Certification Program Fees

On January 1, 2016, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change will be increasing fees for the Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Program.

Existing operator certification program fees – which have remained unchanged since 2004 – account for only half of the true cost to deliver the program. By adjusting fees and adopting the new fee structure, the ministry will recover close to 100 per cent of program costs.

The ministry conducted a full cost assessment and took into account how much time, effort and expertise are needed to provide each service. The ministry also performed a jurisdictional review of operator certification fees being charged for very similar programs across Canada and the United States.

The new fees are similar to what other jurisdictions charge and reflect special consideration to new

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operators/students and small system owners and operators, to ensure that services remain affordable for these groups.

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In addition to increases to the current fees, the ministry is introducing new fees, also effective January 1, 2016, for:

- Temporary drinking water certificate renewals
- Wastewater Operator-in-Training (OIT) certificates
- Wastewater facility classifications
- Reassessment of Director-approved courses

Temporary Drinking Water Certificates

Drinking water operators can apply for a temporary certificate if they were unable to get the required training to have their certificates renewed. Applications for a temporary drinking water certificate must be approved by the program Director.

Currently, temporary drinking water certificates are issued at no cost. However, as with all applications – whether they are for certificate renewals, upgrades or temporary certificates – time, effort and technical knowledge are dedicated to reviewing and assessing each one. Continuing education, training and viable experience as well as all the possible substitutions which may apply need to be carefully considered.

New fees for temporary drinking water certificates will be the same as the fee for all certificate renewals, \$145.

Wastewater Operator-in-Training Certificate Issuance Fee

The ministry is introducing a new fee to issue wastewater OIT certificates. The new fee reflects the effort and resources that are needed to issue these certificates, and brings it in line with drinking water OIT certificates.

The new fee for all wastewater and drinking water OIT certificates will be \$40, and must be submitted with the completed application.

Wastewater Facility Classifications

Wastewater facilities have been exempt from paying fees to have their facilities classified since 2004 when fees for drinking water system classifications were set. Introducing this new fee will ensure a consistent approach to facility classifications and help recover the costs associated with providing this service.

Starting January 1, 2016, all wastewater and drinking water facility owners will be required to pay a \$475 facility classification fee.

Reassessing Director Approved Courses

Commencing in 2016, Director approved training courses will be reassessed every three years to ensure they continue to be relevant and current. Until now, training providers have not had to pay a fee for course reassessments.

The new fee for course reassessments has been determined based on the work involved, and reflects the true cost for providing this service.

Starting January 1, 2016, training providers will be charged a \$125 fee for each course reassessment. More information will be sent to training providers about this new requirement in early 2016.

Learn More About the New Operator Certification Program Fees

The list of all new fees is available on the Ontario Water Wastewater Certification Office's website at www.owwco.ca/fees.htm.

Stay Tuned for OWWCO's New Website!



OWWCO has been working hard to bring you a brand new and improved website to better serve you. Here are some of the new features to look for:

- Mobile-friendly capability
- Easy menu navigation
- User friendly CEU course listing and Operator listing with searching and sorting capability
- Enhanced, easy to read content
- Designated section for small system operators
- 'Power user' menu options for quick access to the information you need

...and more!

Be sure to visit www.owwco.ca on October 1, 2015 to check out the new site.

Upcoming Conferences and Industry Events in Ontario

Event	Presented By	Date	Location
Western Ontario Waterworks Conference www.owwa.ca/event/western-ontario-water-works-conference-2	OWWA	Oct 6 – 7	London
Collection and Conveyance Systems www.weao.org/assets/docs/Events/2015/2015-collection-systems-committee-fall-workshop.pdf	WEAO	Oct 14	Burlington
Eastern Ontario Area Conference www.owwa.ca/event/eastern-ontario-area-conference	OWWA	Oct 14 – 15	Cobourg
2015 OMAA Fall Workshop www.oma.on.ca/en/workshops-and-events/2015-fall-workshop.asp	OMAA	Oct 14 – 16	Kitchener
Power of Water Canada Conference and Tradeshow http://conference.owa.ca	OWA	Oct 18 – 20	Niagara-on-the-Lake
Small Systems Webinar www.owwa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/webinar-2.pdf	OWWA	Oct 21	webinar
OWWA Treatment Seminar: The ABC's of DBP's www.owwa.ca/event/owwa-treatment-seminar	OWWA	Oct 22	Mississauga
Small Community Wastewater Treatment Systems: Challenges and Sustainable Solutions www.weao.org/assets/docs/Events/2015/2015-wastewater-systems-flyer.pdf	WEAO	Oct 22	Milton
Northwestern Ontario Water and Wastewater Conference http://nwowwc.com/main	NWOWWC	Oct 22 - 23	Thunder Bay
2015 OASIS Conference http://oasisontario.on.ca/2015-conferenceexpo	OASIS	Oct 23 – 24	Niagara Falls

NWOWWC: Northwestern Ontario Water and Wastewater Conference
OASIS: Ontario Association of Sewage Industry Services
OMAA: Ontario Municipal Administrators Association

OWA: Ontario Waterpower Association
OWWA: Ontario Water Works Association
WEAO: Water Environment Association of Ontario

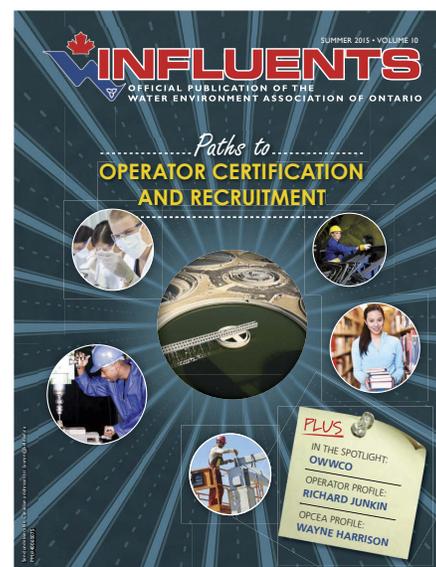
Did You Know... ?

Paths to Operator Certification and Recruitment: OWWCO's Article Featured in "Influents", Summer 2015 Issue

Did you know that Readers Digest recently rated water and wastewater operators number two in their list of **"10 Jobs Americans Can't Live Without?"** Water and wastewater treatment is key to community and environmental health. Ensuring that we have skilled and qualified water and wastewater operators today and for future generations is a responsibility that is shared by many.

Read OWWCO's article entitled, *Helping Operators Successfully Navigate Certification Pathways* in WEAO's Summer issue of *Influents* to find out how the ministry and Ontario's community colleges work together to

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support students and new operators, and to learn about the many ways that employers can provide the much needed support to help our operators maintain their skills and experience, and progress into higher certification.

As stated by Susan Lo, Ontario's Chief Drinking Water Inspector in her latest annual report, "The strength of Ontario's drinking water safety net relies on the skills, experience and performance of those individual who are responsible for operating our regulated systems." By supporting our operators, we too are helping to ensure the health of our communities and our natural environment. Read OWWCO's article at www.weao.org/assets/docs/INFLUENTS/archive/influents_2015_2_summer.pdf.

Overall Responsible Operator Stakeholder Discussions

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change held three meetings in the spring of 2015 with operators and managers of drinking water systems and wastewater facilities. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss concerns regarding the overall responsible operator (ORO) requirements and potential options for addressing them.

The main concerns raised include:

- Lack of clarity regarding the purpose and responsibilities of an overall responsible operator;
- Difficulty recruiting certified operators for senior positions, which often require them to be the overall responsible operator;
- Potential shortage of Class 3 and 4 operators as senior operators retire;
- Difficulty for non-operational staff, who may be designated as the overall responsible operator, to obtain certification.

Stakeholders addressed the rationale for the ORO designation and discussed the unique roles and responsibilities of an ORO. Several options were considered including providing greater clarification as to the purpose of the ORO, allowing non-operators to be designated as an ORO and replacing the ORO with a "lead operator-in-charge".

The ministry will continue to work with stakeholders over the next several months to find opportunities to address these concerns.

WCWC Develops Fact Sheets for Owners, Operators & Operating Authorities



The Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC) is continuously developing fact sheets to provide information and education on water technologies, treatment and distribution topics. The purpose of these fact sheets is to inform owners, operators and operating authorities of drinking water systems and the public.

WCWC Fact Sheets:

Volume 1, Issue 1: Application of Continuous Particle Monitoring Technologies: What Are Particles? How do Particles Affect Water? How can they be monitored? Check out this fact sheet for answers.

Volume 1, Issue 2: Nominal vs. Absolute Filter Ratings of Small System Filters: Filters come with a variety of filter rating claims. It can be a challenge to determine what these ratings mean. This fact sheet identifies the differences between nominal and absolute filter ratings, the suitability of each rating and the different types of filters, such as depth filters and surface filters.

Volume 1, Issue 3: Quantitative Microbial Risk Assessment: What is a quantitative microbial risk assessment (QMRA)? How safe is safe enough? What does the term disability adjusted life year (DALY) refer to? Read this fact sheet to learn about QMRAs.

Volume 1, Issue 4: Degradation of Microcystin-LR Using Chemical Oxidation Processes: Increasing concern has been raised over the environmental and human health impacts of cyanobacterial blooms in surface waters. One of the most common blue-green algae toxins is microcystin-LR. This fact sheet discusses the impact of chlorine and ozone on the degradation of microcystin-LR.

To access WCWC's fact sheets, visit: www.wcwc.ca/en/research/fact-sheets.

Ontario Certification Working Group – Topics at their recent meetings

The Operator Certification Working Group (OCWG) represents various and diverse organizations in the water and wastewater industry. They play an important role with the operator certification program by offering expert advice to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and helping to ensure that operators, operating authorities and other stakeholder organizations are kept informed about program requirements.

The OCWG meets quarterly to discuss issues affecting operator certification and operators' concerns. Below are some of the key topics they discussed at their meeting on March 4, 2015:

- Update on the implementation of temporary drinking water certificate renewals
- Education and outreach targeted at small system owners and operators
- OWWCO stakeholder survey results
- Use of online/eLearning courses to deliver training by the Walkerton Clean Water Centre
- Discussions on the Overall Responsible Operator (ORO) issue
- MOECC/stakeholder meetings to be scheduled for April and May to further discuss ORO
- Upcoming revisions to the Entry-Level Drinking Water Operator Course

At their latest meeting on June 25, 2015, some of the topics that were discussed included:

- Proposed updates and streamlining related to the 'Trained Person' designation
- Review of O. Reg. 128/04 and O. Reg. 129/04 followed by a discussion on possible improvements
- Revisions to the Entry-Level Drinking Water Operator Course
- Update on the ORO discussion group meetings

For more information about the OCWG and highlights of previous meetings, visit OWWCO's site and follow the link under Resources.

WHAT'S NEW?

New Ministry Guidance for Small Systems Operators

NEW!

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change has new and updated guidance documents for operators of small systems that explain how to become certified, how to maintain their certification/designation and the types of systems they can operate.

Resources for Limited Systems Operators:

- **Steps to Become a Limited System Operator**
- **How to Maintain Your Certification: Operators of Limited Groundwater and Limited Surface Water Subsystems**

Resources for 'Trained Persons':

- **Steps to Become a 'Trained Person'**
- **How to Maintain your 'Trained Person' Designation**
- **Guideline 3.9: 'Trained Person' Designation**

Resources for Supervised Persons:

- **Steps to Become a Supervised Person**

Access these documents through the links above, or visit www.owwco.ca.

'Trained Persons': New Rules for Maintaining this Designation

'Trained Persons' operate facilities that are among the least complex drinking water systems regulated under O. Reg. 170/03 of the Safe Drinking Water Act. At a minimum, a 'Trained Person' designation is needed if you operate a designated facility that is serviced by a:

- small non-municipal non-residential drinking water system; or
- small municipal non-residential drinking water system; or
- non-municipal seasonal residential drinking water system.

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change is introducing changes to the rules for maintaining

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the ‘Trained Person’ designation. These changes will help ensure that ‘Trained Persons’ complete relevant and quality training courses that enhance the skill set they need to effectively operate the systems they are responsible for.

These changes will take effect on October 1, 2015.

First, to become a ‘Trained Person’, you need to:

- ✓ Complete the correspondence/online course, **Operation of Small Drinking Water Systems course**, available through the Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC);
- ✓ Keep your course completion certificate which verifies that you are a ‘Trained Person’. It will be required during a ministry inspection;
- ✓ Note that your designation is valid for three years from the date you completed the course.

To maintain your ‘Trained Person’ Designation, you need to:

- ✓ **NEW** Complete one of the following courses that have been specifically selected as acceptable training for ‘Trained Persons’. You must take this training before your designation expires:
 - **Operation of Small Drinking Water Systems** (online or correspondence), WCWC
 - Practical Training for Small Drinking Water System Owners and Operators (classroom), WCWC
 - Best Practices for Small Systems (classroom), WCWC
 - Small Systems Hands-on Workshop (classroom), WCWC
 - **Small Water System Operation and Maintenance** (online or correspondence), California State

Additional courses may be added in the future. For the most up to date list of approved courses, visit www.owwco.ca.

- ✓ Keep your training records for verification.

Tips for Getting Training:

- ✓ Find out when your ‘Trained Person’ designation expires. You must complete the training **before** that date.
- ✓ Visit the Walkerton Clean Water Centre website at www.wcwc.ca to register for one of their courses listed in this article, or
- ✓ Visit the California State website at www.owp.csus.edu to register for their Small Water System Operation and Maintenance Course.

Tips for Keeping Track of Your Training:

- ✓ Take note of when you completed your training. To maintain your designation, you must take a course – from the list of 5 courses mentioned in this article – within 36 months of that date.
- ✓ Use the ministry’s **Training Tracker** to help you log and monitor the training you complete.
- ✓ **Keep all your training records and certificates.** You will need to show proof of training for ministry inspections.

Refer to **Guideline 3.9: ‘Trained Person’ Designation**, which has recently been updated to reflect the changes noted above.

REMINDERS

Is your contact information in WWOCS correct?

To find out about new operator certification bulletins and to get information about important program news, your email address in WWOCS needs to be current. Login at www.lrcsde.lrc.gov.on.ca/wwocs_web to check or update your information.

If you don't have access, download the Operator User Access Request for Water Wastewater Operator Certification System form at www.ontario.ca and send your completed form by mail or fax to:

Ontario Water Wastewater Certification Office
302 The East Mall, Suite 600
Etobicoke, ON M9B 6C7
Fax: 416-231-2107

Temporary Drinking Water Certificates

Drinking Water Operators and Water Quality Analysts can apply for a temporary certificate if they did not meet training requirements within the three year validity period of their certificate.

A temporary certificate may be issued if:

- a valid reason for not completing the required training is provided with the renewal application; and
- the Director is satisfied that the training can be completed before the temporary certificate expires.

Visit www.owwco.ca and click on the news item entitled 'Important Renewal News' for more information, including when a temporary certificate may be issued.