

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**FOR USE BY:** Program administrator and ministry staff

**TO RESPOND TO:** Inquiries from Owners / Operating Authorities of Drinking Water Subsystems and Wastewater Facilities and Certified / Licensed Operators

**RE:** Operator certification and licensing program changes under the amended emergency order for drinking water system and sewage works

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## Legal Disclaimer

This guidance is for information only and is not a substitute for legal or other professional advice in connection with any particular matter. It deals with complicated matters in a summarized fashion and some details may not be included. Persons asking for advice about whether and how these temporary changes apply in specific circumstances should be instructed to consult the relevant legislation and regulations and, if necessary, with their own legal advisor. They should also be cautioned that they are solely responsible for complying with all applicable regulatory and other legal requirements.

Question	Answer
<b>Systems Owners/Operating Authorities</b>	
1. I had limited staff and employed non-certified personnel to operate my subsystem / facility during the emergency period. Can they continue to operate?	If you have employed non-certified persons to address staffing shortages as permitted through the emergency order ( <a href="#">O. Reg. 75/20</a> ) on or before <b>July 15, 2020</b> , they may continue to operate the subsystem / facility until the end of <b>July 31, 2020</b> . After this period of transition, owners and operating authorities must return to using certified operators (i.e. those who hold a valid certificate or licence).
2. How will certificate and licence extensions impact their expiry dates?	All drinking water certificates and wastewater licences that expire between March 23, 2020, and October 31, 2020, will be considered valid until the later of the following dates:

	<p>a) the end of the sixth month after their expiry date;  b) the end of the third month after the termination of Ontario’s declaration of emergency.</p> <p>Operator certificates and licences will continue to expire at the end of the month, which is when they normally expire.</p>
<p>3. Why are operator certificates and licences that are expiring later in the year (e.g. October 31, 2020) being extended?</p>	<p>It is expected that the operator training required for certificate renewal will continue to be limited in the coming months while training providers transition to online / correspondence course delivery and adjust their in-class courses to smaller class sizes to meet physical distancing requirements. This extension will ensure operators have adequate time to complete the training required to maintain their certification.</p>
<p>4. Why don’t all extended certificates and licences expire on the same date?</p>	<p>The current extension will allow certificate and licence renewals to be staggered. This will help alleviate administrative burdens to system owners and operating authorities and ensure smooth and orderly coordination of operator certification and training.</p>
<p>5. Can forms be submitted electronically?</p>	<p>The ministry is currently exploring online forms and payment submission formats that meet payment card security standards.</p> <p>The Ontario Water Wastewater Certification Office (OWWCO) currently continues to receive and process applications by <u>mail and fax</u>. To facilitate form submission efficiency, the following options may be considered to minimize paper handling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms may be submitted by mail or fax with electronic signatures;</li> <li>• Rather than submitting training documents (e.g., course completion certificates), OWWCO will temporarily accept the following information in a table format:</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Date of training, course name, name of training provider/organization, telephone number of training provider/organization, duration in hours.</b></p> <p>OWWCO may request copies of these documents at a later date to verify the information provided.</p>
<p>6. Is the ministry working with training providers to expand the availability of online / distance learning for operators?</p>	<p>The ministry is encouraging training providers to transition course delivery to correspondence / online format to support distance learning. This will help to increase course availability in the coming months. Please continue to check the <a href="#">Director approved course list</a> for drinking water courses that become available through distance learning.</p> <p>System owners and operating authorities should strongly encourage their operators to consider these alternative training delivery formats to ensure they are keeping current on the latest standards and best practices in their field. As the province reopens, it's expected that training providers will resume in-person training in accordance with current public health requirements.</p>
<p><b>Operators</b></p>	
<p>1. My certificate / licence was set to expire between March 23, 2020, and October 31, 2020, and was extended. What's my new expiry date?</p>	<p>Under the amended emergency order, all certificates and licences that expire between March 23, 2020, and October 31, 2020, will be considered valid until the later of the following dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the end of the sixth month after their expiry date;</li> <li>b) the end of the third month after the termination of Ontario's declaration of emergency.</li> </ul> <p>To prepare for your upcoming renewal, please see the table below for certificate / licence expiry timelines:</p>

	Original Expiry Date	Extended Expiry Date
	March 31, 2020	October 31, 2020
	April 30, 2020	October 31, 2020
	May 31, 2020	November 30, 2020
	June 30, 2020	December 31, 2020
	July 31, 2020	January 31, 2021
	August 31, 2020	February 28, 2021
	September 30, 2020	March 31, 2021
	October 31, 2020	April 30, 2021
	These extensions will be automatically applied. No application or payment is required.	
2. Will I be sent a new certificate / licence with my extended expiry date?	No. Your certificate and new expiry date will be reflected on the operator listing report on OWWCO's website.	
3. My certificate / licence was set to expire on June 30, 2020, and it was extended to December 31, 2020. When should I submit my renewal application?	If you have met your renewal requirements, you may submit your certificate or licence renewal application up to three months prior to your new expiry date (in this example, after October 1, 2020) to OWWCO, who continues to receive and process applications by <a href="#">mail and fax</a> .	
4. A lot of in-class training has been cancelled and I am having difficulty finding online drinking water courses to meet training requirements. My certificate is expiring after October 31, 2020 and I've yet to meet my training requirements. How should I prepare for my renewal?	Operators are expected to participate in distance learning wherever possible to fulfill their training requirements. Please continue to check the <a href="#">Director approved course list</a> on owwco.ca for drinking water courses that become available through distance learning such as a correspondence, computer-based delivery.  If you are unable to meet the training requirements due to training cancellations before your certificate expires, you may apply for a <a href="#">temporary renewal</a> .	

<p>5. A lot of in-class training has been cancelled and I am having difficulty meeting my annual wastewater training requirements. What do I do?</p>	<p>To address the current shortage of in-person training, the annual wastewater training requirement has been reduced from 40 hours to 10 hours for the 2020 calendar year.</p> <p>Wherever possible, operators are encouraged to participate in alternatives to in-class training such as webinars, facilitated training videos, and review or discussion of operating procedures to stay up-to-date on technical knowledge and skills.</p> <p>In subsequent training years, wastewater operators will continue to be required to complete 40 hours of annual training.</p>
<p>6. My exam was postponed / cancelled. Do I need to contact OWWCO to reschedule it? Should I submit a new application form?</p>	<p>In consultation with the ministry, OWWCO will implement an exam continuation plan that ensures exams will be administered safely and in locations throughout the province. Due to differences in regional reopenings, upcoming exam schedules will be dependent on venue availability and public health recommendations.</p> <p>If you applied or registered for an exam that has been postponed, you do not need to reapply. OWWCO staff will be reaching out to you regarding rescheduling options. OWWCO will provide updates on exam availability as the information becomes available. We appreciate your patience and understanding during this time.</p>
<p>7. I would like to register to write an exam. Should I send in my application now?</p>	<p>Exams have been postponed until <b>Monday, August 31</b>. OWWCO will be implementing an examination continuation plan that ensures exams will be administered safely and in locations throughout the province. Due to differences in regional reopenings, upcoming exam schedules will be dependent on venue availability and public health recommendations.</p> <p>Exam offerings will be added to the <a href="#">exam schedule</a> on OWWCO's website as they become available. Please check the schedule before submitting your application.</p>