



The Certified Operator

*Operator Certification Program Information for Waterworks and Wastewater Operators.
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A NOTE FROM THE OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Hello Certified Operators!

It was great to see many of you at conferences and meetings over the past year. I always admire your diligence and dedication to your work. You all play such an important role in providing safe drinking water and protecting the waterways of the state.

The Operator Certification Program has been busy over this past year. It has been a little over a year since the revised Wisconsin Administrative Rule NR114 – Certification Requirements for Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators took effect. Pages 2 - 3 address common questions operators have regarding these changes, such as the advanced point system, collection system certification and the new total nitrogen removal and anaerobic treatment of liquid waste subclasses.

We continue to seek ways to improve customer service and increase efficiency. For the first time, *this August we will be emailing exam applications to operators who have taken an exam in the last year and half.*

In the past, these applications were sent via regular mail. Operators who have an email address on file will receive an email with a PDF of their exam application. This will be an added convenience for operators because they will receive their application quicker and can print it at any time before the application deadline; operators no longer need to worry about misplacing the hard copy application. For operators who do not have an email address on file, we will continue to mail hard copies of the exam application.

Now that we have over 2 ½ years of electronic tracking of credits under our belt, and with the vast majority of paper credit slips “off the street” so to speak, *the operator certification program is moving in the direction of online renewals.* This is a project we will be working on in the coming year. Online renewals will have an e-signature function and also allow operators or their employer to pay by e-check or credit card. As this project moves forward, communications will be sent to all op-

erators. We will ask for input from operators along the way.

I am happy to hear of any comments or suggestions that you have for the program. Feel free to call me or email with any questions. I can be reached at: (608) 266-0498 or Lisa.Bushby@Wisconsin.gov.

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Two New Wastewater Treatment Subclasses

The revised Wisconsin Administrative Code NR 114 established the new Nutrient Removal – Total Nitrogen and Biological Treatment- Anaerobic Treatment of Liquid Waste subclasses. Please read below to understand the applicability of these subclasses to treatment plants and certification.

Subclass N - Nutrient Removal – Total Nitrogen applies to wastewater facilities if the facility was designed and is operated for Total Nitrogen Removal (organic nitrogen, ammonia nitrogen and nitrite-nitrate nitrogen) to meet a Total Nitrogen limit in the WPDES permit. Currently this applies mostly to facilities that discharge to a land infiltration system/groundwater. Surface water dischargers currently do not have limits for Total Nitrogen.

This subclass does NOT apply to plants with just ammonia (NH₃) limits or have anoxic selectors as part of Biological Phosphorus Removal (BPR).

Subclass A5 - Biological Treatment- Anaerobic Treatment of Liquid Waste applies almost exclusively to industrial wastewater treatment facilities that treat high strength (BOD) liquid wastewater, such as dairies, whey processors, food processors and breweries. These are specialized, and often patented, anaerobic upflow reactors for the treatment of high strength liquid wastewater.

This subclass does NOT apply to municipal or industrial treatment plants with anaerobic digesters, which treat biosolids/sludge in the solids treatment train. Anaerobic digesters are included under Subclass C – Biological Solids/Sludge Handling, Processing, and Reuse.

The study guides and examinations for these two new subclasses are not available at this time. Operators will be informed when they are available, tentatively in 2017. After the exams are available, operators will have one year to obtain this certification if it is needed at their facility.

If you have any questions about these two subclasses, please contact the DNR engineer assigned to your facility.

WASTEWATER OPERATORS COLLECTION SYSTEM CERTIFICATION

Under the revised Wisconsin Administrative Rule NR 114, owners of treatment works, which includes the treatment plant and sanitary sewer collection systems associated with it, shall have at least one operator certified in the new collection system subclass. For satellite sewerage collection systems, this certification is voluntary. However, the Department highly recommends that satellite systems have a certified operator in collection systems. This new requirement was made in order to encourage the ad-

vancement of operator knowledge and competency in operating and rehabilitating this aging infrastructure. In addition, collection system certification will provide the necessary knowledge to develop and implement CMOM programs.

To become certified, the person will need to take the 50 question multiple choice collection systems exam. The basic general wastewater exam is not required for collection system certification.

The collection system study guide and exam has not yet been developed and will tentatively be complete in 2018. Once the collection system study guide and exam have been developed by the department, and at the time of WPDES permit reissuance, collection system operators will have a permit term of 5 years to obtain collection system certification. Basic level certification is the only level required for all collection systems.

Wastewater Operators - How to Obtain Advanced Level Certification

As part of the NR114 rule revision that took effect July 1, 2015, a point system was established for advanced level certification to allow for more flexibility beyond just taking an exam. Now an operator can obtain points towards advanced level certification by completing advanced level coursework, completing the statewide approved apprenticeship program, or if they have an advanced level degree related to wastewater treatment. A total of 10 advanced points are needed in order to apply for advanced level certification.

Hands-on experience is still a key component in advancing in certification levels; at least 4 of the points must be obtained through 4 years of hands-on experience. A maximum of 6 years of hands-on experience can be used towards points. Refer to the chart below for a breakdown of the point system.

Type	Point Method	Points	Minimum Hours
Experience	4 years hands-on	4	4,000
	5 years hands-on	5	5,000
	6 years hands-on	6	6,000
Degree	Undergrad or Graduate Degree	6	At least 240 hours wastewater related courses
	Water/Wastewater Associates Degree	6	N/A
Apprenticeship	Completion of State Approved Apprenticeship Program	6	N/A
Exam	100 Question Multiple Course Exam	4	N/A
Advanced Coursework	Pre-approved by the DNR and on list of approved courses	2	80
		1.5	60
		1	40
		0.5	20

A list of approved advanced level courses are posted on the operator certification website. This list is updated September 1st of every year.

To apply for advanced level certification, an operator must complete an application (available on the Operator Certification website) and pay a \$100 application fee.

For questions on advanced level certification, please contact Jack Saltes, Wastewater Operations Engineer, at 608-264-6045 or Jack.Saltes@Wisconsin.gov

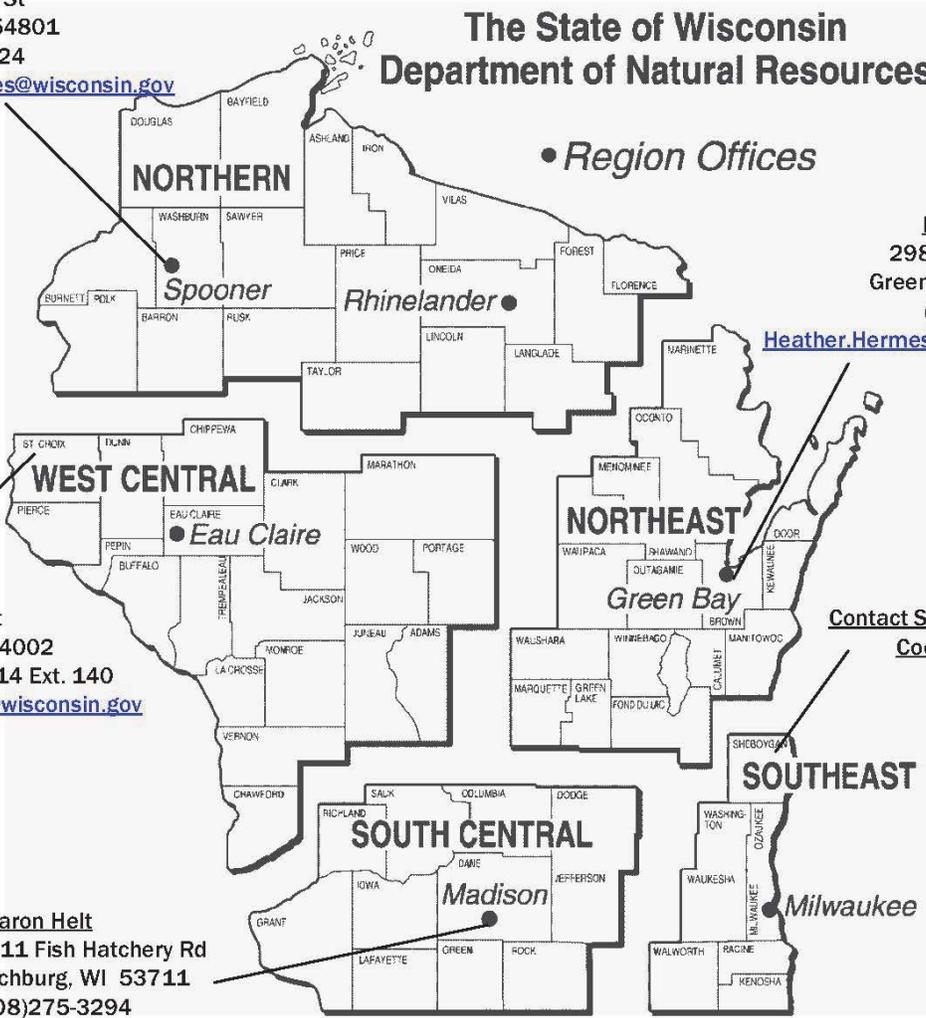
REGIONAL COORDINATORS—WATERWORKS OPERATORS



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Waterworks Operator Certification Regional Coordinators

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The State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



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**Contact Statewide
Coordinator**

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608-266-0498
Lisa.Bushby@wisconsin.gov

For general questions, e-mail the Operator Certification Mailbox at:
DNROpCert@wisconsin.gov

WASTEWATER CONTACTS

For wastewater questions in the northeast part of the state, please contact Dick Sachs: 2984 Shawano Ave, Green Bay, WI 54313-6727, (920) 662-5176, Richard.Sachs@Wisconsin.gov

For all other parts of the state, please contact Lisa Bushby: PO Box 7921, Madison WI 53707-7921, (608) 266-0498, Lisa.Bushby@Wisconsin.gov.

Moving On...

Congratulations to **Diane Ten Pas** who has accepted a new position as a Water Supply Specialist in the DNR—Rhineland office! The Operator Certification Program appreciates all the work she has done. She will be missed! Until the southeast regional operator certification coordinator position is filled, operators in that part of the state may contact Lisa Bushby, Statewide Operator Certification Coordinator.

ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC), Green Bay Campus, Green Bay WI
Environmental Engineering Waste and Water Technology

Gateway Technical College, Sturtevant, WI
Civil Engineering Technology - Fresh Water Resources

Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), Mequon Campus, Mequon WI
Environmental Health and Water Quality Technology A.A.S. Degree

Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC), Fond du Lac, WI
Water Quality Technology A.A.S. Degree, Online Only

Bay College, Escanaba Campus, Escanaba MI
Water Resource Management A.A.S. Degree

Lewis and Clark Community College, Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville Environmental Resource Training Center, Edwardsville IL
Environmental Treatment Technologies—Water Treatment A.A.S. Degree

St Cloud Technical and Community College, St Cloud, Minnesota
Water Environment Technologies A.A.S. Degree

Another Resource

WaterOperator.org is a free service to support water and wastewater operators with comprehensive resources and information in one easy-to-use place. The website contains a searchable document library, a forum, and a blog. You may also sign up for their weekly newsletter.

<http://wateroperator.org>

Waterworks Study Materials Available for Loan at Wisconsin's Water Library!

Are you, or is someone you know, preparing for an operator certification exam?

Did you know that Wisconsin residents can check out drinking water and wastewater manuals from the UW Water Library? Basic study guides are available on the DNR's Operator Certification website, but the UW Water Library has additional study resources on various aspects of operation and treatment. Go to the UW Water Library website to access the book request form.



Once you complete the online form, the manual(s) will be delivered to your local library for you to pick up. The loan period is 1 month, and books can be renewed up to 3 times.

Take advantage of these free resources to help study for the exams!

California State University Sacramento, Field Study Training Program Guides:

- *Water Distribution System Operation and Maintenance*, 6th Edition
- *Water Treatment Plant Operation*, Vol. I & II 6th Edition
- *Small Water System Operation and Maintenance*, 5th Edition

American Water Works Association Training Handbooks:

- *Water treatment operator training handbook*
- *Water distribution operator training handbook*

Visit <http://aqua.wisc.edu/waterlibrary/> to learn more.

Wastewater Operator Apprenticeship Program

Are you, or your employee, new to wastewater treatment and looking for a way to further your knowledge on this field? Want to take wastewater classes while will earning an income and on-the-job experience?

Contact the Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards at:

Website: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/>

Phone: (608) 266-3332



Wisconsin's Sector Alliance for the Green Economy

Veterans Fee Waiver Program

Veterans may apply for a one-time fee waiver to be used towards exam fees. Visit the Operator Certification Forms & Applications Webpage for more information.



Operator Certification Website:

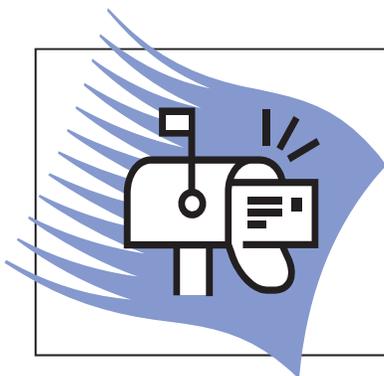
<http://dnr.wi.gov/regulations/opcert>

-OR-

You may start at the DNR homepage
<http://dnr.wi.gov> and search keywords
“Operator Certification”

ONLINE AND CORRESPONDENCE TRAINING

Need continuing education credits last minute? Don't want to travel to attend a training event? Online or correspondence courses may be a good option for you. Visit the Operator Certification website to find a list of approved online training providers.



Employment or Address Changes Reminder:

If you change employment, ask your facility to notify your DNR representative of any personnel changes. Contact your regional coordinator (*see pages 4-5*) if you have a change in mailing or email address. Current contact information helps get important updates and reminders to you in a timely manner.



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Operator Certification Program
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This newsletter is available electronically.

The Certified Operator was e-mailed to all operators with email addresses on file. If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please provide your name, certification number, and email address to DNROpCert@Wisconsin.gov

UPCOMING EXAM DATES

Wednesday, November 2nd - Deadline to apply October 5, 2016

Wednesday, May 3rd - Deadline to apply April 5, 2017

Exam applications will be emailed to operators who have taken an exam in the last year and a half. Exam applications are also available on our website:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/> Keyword Search: "Operator Certification"

CONGRATULATIONS!

At the May 4th, 2016 exams, 119 *new* municipal waterworks and 88 *new* wastewater operators became certified. Congratulations to all the new certified operators and to operators that added a new subclass to their certification!

This newsletter is sent to all active certified operators that we have on file.