

Operator Certification Bulletin | Winter 2012

Drinking Water and Wastewater Operator Certification News

For more news or information please visit
www.ontario.ca/drinkingwater or www.owwco.ca

WHAT'S NEW?

New and Improved Application Forms and Security Measures

Updated versions of the following Operator Certification Program forms are now available through the **OWWCO website** and the Ministry of the Environment's **Drinking Water Ontario website**:

- Exam Registration Application
- Study Manual Order Form
- Renewal Applications
- Operator-in-Training Exam and Issuance Applications
- Limited Subsystem Certificate Application
- Conditional Certificate/Licence Application
- Reciprocity Application
- Facility Classification Applications

Next time you're completing one, be sure to look for the 2012/09 date at the bottom of the form to ensure you're using the latest version.

Note that as of April 1, 2013, only the current forms listed on the ministry **website** will be accepted.

Certificate/Licence upgrade application forms are currently under review and will be available later this year.

Important Notice: As of January 1st, 2013, applications can no longer be submitted through email

The Ministry of the Environment and OWWCO are working to enhance the security of credit card data, according to requirements set out in the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS).

One of the measures OWWCO is undertaking to protect your information is to avoid accepting credit card information by email. Therefore, as of January 1, 2013, all drinking water and wastewater operator certification applications with credit card information must be submitted by fax or by mail.



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New Operator Code of Conduct

All certified drinking water operators are expected to act and behave with a view of protecting public health. Ontario Regulation 128/04 states that an operator shall “exercise the level of care, diligence and skill in respect of a (drinking) water system that a reasonably prudent operator would be expected to exercise in a similar situation” and “to act honestly, competently and with integrity, with a view to ensuring the protection and safety of the users of the (water) system.” The ministry is authorized to revoke or suspend an operator’s certificate if he/she has failed to meet the above requirements.

Maintaining the security of the certification exams and the certification application process is essential to uphold the integrity of the operator certification program and to ensure fairness for all operators.

In the past few years the Ministry of the Environment’s Operator Certification Program has dealt with several instances where operators have acted dishonestly during examination sessions and when submitting applications for drinking water operator certificates and wastewater operator licences. New procedures and measures to help safeguard operator certification examinations were implemented in 2011.

To support these measures, a Water and Wastewater Operator Certification and Exam Code of Conduct has been developed by the Ministry of the Environment in consultation with the Operator Certification Working Group.

Cheating would include but not be limited to:

- Possessing or using any non-authorized materials or equipment during the exam including electronic devices such as cell phones, pagers, smartphones, PDA’s, and/or programmable calculators that may compromise the integrity of the examination;
- Copying exam content by any method;
- Removing any exam materials from the examination room;
- Sharing information about exam content with others;
- Assuming the identity of someone else or having another person assume your identity for the purpose of taking the certification examination;
- Falsifying information/documentation for the purpose of obtaining a Drinking Water certificate or a Wastewater Operator licence.

The purpose of the code is to outline in writing, what the Ministry considers unethical behaviour during the exam and application process, as well as to clearly communicate the potential consequences an operator could face if they conduct themselves dishonestly.

The expectation is that an operator will:

- Not cheat in order to aid himself/herself or another person to pass a certification examination; or
- Not engage in any other form of unethical behaviour for the purpose of obtaining a Drinking Water Operator certificate or a Wastewater Operator licence; or
- Follow written and verbal instructions provided by the invigilator at the certification examination session.

Candidates who are found to be in violation of the Code may:

- Have their exam confiscated and be asked to leave the exam session; and/or
- Have their exam results considered void and not released; and/or
- Have their application fees forfeited; and/or
- Be barred from writing future certification exams.

In some circumstances, the applicant’s current certificates/licences could also be revoked or suspended. Once implemented, signing this code will be considered a pre-condition for writing a ministry certification exam.

The Code was introduced in December 2012 at select exam locations and will be fully implemented by spring 2013.

Recent Disciplinary Actions

The Ministry of the Environment continues to implement measures to help ensure the integrity of the operator certification program.

Unethical operator behaviour is rare; however, when incidents occur, the ramifications have a negative impact on many – from the operator in question – to his/her employer, the Ontario Water Wastewater Certification Office, the Ministry of the Environment and the public we serve.

Recently, the Ministry of the Environment issued administrative penalties to several operators failing to adhere to examination rules. These penalties ranged from nullifying the operator's exam results, barring the

operator from writing future exams for a one to three year period and refusing to renew a certificate.

Some types of unethical behaviour may also result in revocation of existing certificates.

In addition, the Ministry has revoked municipality/ employer access to Operator-in-Training exams within their workplace as a result of exam irregularities.

While incidents like these don't happen very often, the ministry takes them very seriously, not only to minimize unethical behaviour but to promote fairness among all operators who do conduct themselves ethically and honestly.

Hands-on Training Available Province-wide!

The Walkerton Clean Water Centre offers a wide variety of hands-on training courses and delivery options. Training is delivered at over 120 locations across the province or can be provided on-site upon request. The hands-on training courses currently offered are:

- **NEW** Centrifugal Pumps: Operation, Maintenance and Energy Savings - 0.7 CEUs
- Drinking Water Treatment and Quality Monitoring - 0.6 CEUs
- Fundamentals of Leak Detection - 0.6 CEUs
- Iron and Manganese Control Strategies - 0.7 CEUs
- Performing Inspections and Maintenance of Fire Hydrants - 0.7 CEUs

- Performing Service Taps on Watermains - 0.7 CEUs
- Practical Training for Small Drinking Water System Owners and Operators - 0.7 CEUs
- **NEW** Practice of Water Analysis and Interpretation - 1.3 CEUs
- **NEW** Practice of Water Chlorination - 0.7 CEUs
- Treatability Studies and Jar Testing - 0.7 CEUs
- Water Quality Analyst - 1.8 CEUs
- Maintenancefest - CEUs vary

To register for a course, go to wewc.ca/registration

To schedule training, please contact: **866-515-0550** or training@wewc.ca

WHAT'S COMING UP?

Guidelines Under Review

The Ministry of the Environment is proposing changes to Guideline 5.1 (Overall Responsible Operator) and Guideline 3.4/3.4b (Operator Experience) to address concerns about perceived limitations in Ontario Regulations 128/04 and 129/04 regarding the operating experience requirement to become an Overall Responsible Operator (ORO), and perceived barriers for filling senior level positions.

The Operator Certification Working Group established subcommittees to review and provide recommendations to the ministry on these guidelines. The ministry also made a presentation at the November 2011 Management Forum to initiate the conversation about concerns related to operational experience requirements for OROs.

Overall Responsible Operator (Guideline 5.1)

The two key issues surrounding the ORO guideline that have been raised are:

1. Some municipalities place the ORO designation in management positions which may not be operational. As such, any barriers to certification for these individuals would present barriers for meeting the ORO requirements.
2. The existing regulations require that the ORO designation be placed with an operator classified at the same level or higher than the facility. If a person eligible to be an ORO is absent or unable to act as an ORO, an operator with one class lower may be designated as a backup ORO for up to 150 days a year. Some concerns have been raised regarding limitations on using a backup ORO if other suitably classified operators are present and able to act.

Operator Experience (Guideline 3.4/3.4b)

As announced in the 2011 [Fall Operator Certification Bulletin](#), members of the Operator Certification Working Group (OCWG) have been discussing what duties can be considered as operational experience when applying for a certificate or licence.

The OCWG subcommittee reviewed different types of job duties and made recommendations to the Ministry of the Environment on how the Director applies the experience requirements of drinking water and wastewater operators under the respective regulations within the scope of existing guidelines. Peripheral operational responsibilities, such as maintenance, process optimization and compliance have been evaluated to explore opportunities within a technologically advancing workplace.

The subcommittee continued the work that was presented to the water and wastewater operator community in the [Fall 2011 Operator Certification Bulletin](#), which attracted over 3,340 website hits. The resulting comments from this posting and dialogue lead to the development of a draft consolidated guideline for both drinking water and wastewater experience that clarifies the definition of “operating experience” and provides better guidance to operators on the types of duties which can be accepted to meet the experience requirement for a certificate/licence.

Both updated draft guidelines (related to operator experience and overall responsible operator) will be posted online for review and comment later this year.

Upcoming Regional Conferences and Seminars in Ontario

Event	Hosted By	Date	Location
Conference on Stormwater & Urban Water Systems Modeling	Computational Hydraulics Int.	Feb 21-22	Brampton
48th Central Canadian Symposium on Water Quality Research	CWWA/CAWQ	Mar 6-8	Hamilton
42nd Annual WEAO Technical Symposium & OPCEA Exhibition	WEAO	Apr 7-9	Toronto

CWWA: Canadian Water and Wastewater Association | CAWQ: Canadian Association for Water Quality | WEAO: Water Environmental Association of Ontario

DID YOU KNOW...?

Peel and Sheridan – An Exemplary Partnership

Since 2006, the Region of Peel and Sheridan College have been working together to develop the Water Distribution and Supply Program, combining industry knowledge with applied teaching expertise.

This strategic partnership ensures Peel has qualified, knowledgeable, and skilled staff working on the water distribution and wastewater collection systems. Peel's investment in its Water and Wastewater Operators workforce demonstrates their commitment to professional development and continuous improvement. Not only does this enable Peel to consistently meet the requirements of their community, it also positions the organization well for future succession needs.

The Region of Peel helped develop the curriculum and Sheridan College ensured the educational depth and quality of the program. Peel and Sheridan continue to collaborate to ensure the program reflects current industry and regulatory standards, and meets Peel's requirements. The Water Distribution and Supply Program consists of seven courses that are facilitated by qualified instructors from the water and wastewater industry.

Upon completion, graduates receive a Sheridan College Certificate and obtain their required Continuing



Education Units. Water and Wastewater Operators who complete Sheridan's program may use their earned credits towards the Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection Ontario College Certificate.

To date, a total of 114 Peel operators have participated in at least one of the courses offered through Sheridan College.

The 2012 Convocation class featured above is the first to graduate after completing all seven courses. The Region of Peel and Sheridan College congratulate the Water Distribution and Supply Program Graduates of 2012 for achieving this significant accomplishment!

Practical Training for Small Drinking Water System Owners and Operators

A growing need to provide more practical hands-on training spearheaded the development of the one-day course, "Practical Training for Small Drinking Water System Owners and Operators".

This training is focussed on common operational issues related to small system owners that are regulated under both Ontario Regulation 170/03 of the Safe Drinking Water Act, as well as those that fall under Ontario Regulation 319 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act. The course was developed by the Walkerton Clean Water Centre in consultation with both the Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's Public Health Inspectors.

The Practical Training for Small Drinking Water System Owners and Operators course incorporates hands-on

activities, equipment demos, and group discussions on topics that are fundamental to the proper operation of small systems, such as proper sampling techniques, chlorine residual and turbidity testing, responding to adverse test results as well as basic troubleshooting techniques for cartridge filters, UV disinfection, and chlorine feed systems. An important element of the course is that it brings together small system owners and operators and gives them a chance to exchange ideas and learn from each other.

The course was first delivered in October of 2011 and to date, 221 small system owners and operators have attended sessions offered across the province.

For more information on upcoming courses and to register, go to www.wcwc.ca/en/training/scheduled-courses.

Requirements to Operate a Small Municipal Residential System or Non-municipal Year-round Residential System

Do you know what the requirements are to operate a small municipal residential system or non-municipal year round residential system? If not, look below! These types of systems are required to have a Limited System Operator. In addition, a supervised person may be used to take samples and perform turbidity or chlorine residual tests. Just keep in mind that if you are a “Supervised

Person” working in this type of system, you are still required to be trained, have your work supervised and you may not adjust or operate treatment equipment.

For more information on how to become a Limited System operator or a “Supervised Person”, please visit [Drinking Water Ontario](#).

“Supervised Person”



- Needs to be trained by a certified operator
- Training needs to be documented
- Work is supervised by the certified operator (can be off site)
- All equipment adjustments to be completed by certified operator
- All tests results are immediately related to the certified operator
- No annual training requirement

Limited System Operator



- Must complete the Operation of Small Drinking Water Systems course
- Must successfully pass the Limited System Operator examination
- Must submit an application for the issuance of a Limited System Operator certificate by passing the exam, and providing evidence of grade 12 or equivalent
- Must verify 20 hours of annual training to renew certificate every three years

Ontario Certification Working Group – Topics At Their Recent Meeting

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 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 May 31, 2012:

- Designation of Overall Responsible Operator
- Clarification of operator experience
- Guidance materials for facility classification, i.e., classifying new technologies
- OWWCO customer service survey results
- OWWCO Stakeholder Workshop for representatives

of municipalities and operating authorities on administrative procedures/operator certification program policies

At their latest meeting on November 6, 2012, some of the topics that were discussed included:

- New and improved application forms
- Operator-in-Training guideline
- Overall Responsible Operator vs. Operator-in-Charge guideline
- Experience as a Wastewater Operator and Experience as a Drinking Water Operator guidelines
- Operator certification and exam code of conduct
- Updates from the Walkerton Clean Water Centre
- and more...

For more information about the OCWG and highlights of previous meetings, visit OWWCO’s site and follow the link under [Resources](#).

Updates from the Water Environment Association of Ontario (WEAO)

Operations Challenge at WEFTEC

Wastewater collection and treatment personnel from across the world attended the Water Environment Federation's (WEF) Annual Technical Exhibition and Conference to display their skills during Operations Challenge 2012 in New Orleans this past October.

WEAO would like to congratulate the Ontario Clean Water Agency Jets from Stratford and the Durham Sludgehammers who took part. The OCWA Jets placed second and the Sludgehammers placed ninth in Division Two against strong competition in a field of 29 teams from Canada, USA and Argentina.

Well done!



OCWA Jets



Durham Sludgehammers

Wastewater Operator Training Advisory Committee (WOTAC)

The Professional Wastewater Operators (PWO) Committee of the WEAO would like to organize a Wastewater Operator Training Advisory Committee. The purpose of the committee is to assess the skills required by operators and develop a suitable training curriculum to organize and better train the operators and maintainers of Ontario's wastewater facilities. This initiative will complement efforts made by the Operators of the Future Working Group formed this year by WEF. They are developing a format for a national apprenticeship that can be used and adapted by any of WEF's member associations, including WEAO.

If you have an interest in participating on this committee, please send a letter of interest including a short bio indicating your role in the industry to Rick Niesink, PWO Chair at rick.niesink@niagararegion.ca by February 8, 2013. Details about meeting participation, frequency etc. will be determined once the committee membership is established.

REMINDERS

Exam Result Validity – Guideline 3.11

If you passed an exam on or before October 2007 and did not pursue a certificate/license, please take note that your exam result can no longer be considered valid as of October 2012.

Guideline 3.11: Exam Result Validity outlines that exam results are valid for five years from the date of the exam. After five years, exam results will no longer be considered an

examination approved by the Director. If this applies to you, to obtain an operator's certificate/licence, you will have to re-write the examination.

This guideline has no impact on operators who hold valid operator certificates/licences. Read the [guideline](#) for more information.

Standard of Care Came into Effect on December 31, 2012

As of December 31, 2012, a statutory standard of care under the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002, came into force for individuals who have oversight responsibilities for municipal drinking water systems, and can extend to municipal councillors.

To learn more, read the Ministry of the Environment's guide called, "[Taking Care of Your Drinking Water](#)".

The Walkerton Clean Water Centre offers a three-hour workshop on the statutory standard of care. Visit www.wcwc.ca/en for upcoming course offerings.



"Water is unique as a local service. It is, of course, essential to human life and to the functioning of communities, (and) the consequences of a failure in the water system (are) most seriously felt by those who depend on it locally. Municipal ownership, and the ensuing responsibilities, should provide a high degree of public accountability in relation to the local water system."

— Report of the Walkerton Inquiry, Justice Dennis O'Connor, 2002.

OWWCO's Website: Your One-stop Information Portal

Need information on renewing and upgrading your licence? Want to know when exams are scheduled? Want to learn how to become a certified drinking water operator-in-training, operator or water quality analyst? Visit OWWCO's website for all your certification information needs including forms, guides and information, upcoming events and much more.

According to OWWCO's latest Operator survey results, over 90% of respondents who visit OWWCO's website find the information they need.

Remember to subscribe to OWWCO's website to receive current certification news and information throughout the year. Visit the OWWCO website today at www.owwco.ca.



Keep your WWOCS profile updated



Is your contact information up to date in WWOCS (Water and Wastewater Operator Certification System)? Be sure to keep your email information current to receive notices about future Operator Certification eBulletins.

Don't have access to WWOCS? Simply submit a completed request form to OWWCO by mail or fax. Request forms and WWOCS user guides for operators and trainers are available on OWWCO's [website](http://www.owwco.ca).

Get the latest news from the Ministry of the Environment

You can stay up-to-date on the environmental issues that matter to you by subscribing to the Ministry of the Environment's [Drinking Water Ontario](http://www.moe.gov.on.ca) site.

Select from a variety of subjects you would like updates on, such as drive clean, pesticides, waste reduction, toxics reduction and more.

Simply follow this [link](#), identify your areas of interest and complete a short online form.