

INFORMATION FOR OPERATORS TAKING CERTIFICATION EXAMS

DEP Operator Certification Program Contact: 717.787.5236

- ****ATTENTION OPERATORS**** SIGN UP FOR ALL TESTS YOU WISH TO TAKE at a 4-hour exam session. We recommend taking up to 8 exams in one 4-hour session.
- DEP's goal is to grant all interested operators the opportunity to register for an exam and obtain certification. There are no restrictions on how many exams sessions an operator can sit for in a year; however, **please allow one month in between each exam session to receive your exam scores so you do not take an exam twice.**
- **FOR EXAM STUDY MATERIAL**, go to the operator website at www.depweb.state.pa.us/operatorcenter, click on the Training button on right, click on Department Training Modules or contact the Operator Training staff at 717.787.0122. Subclass definitions can also be found on the operator website (above).
- **Contact the Exam Provider listed on the exam schedule to sign up for Operator Certification Exams, NOT DEP.**
- **EXAM FEES:** The exam provider charges an exam session fee (varies per exam provider) and DEP charges \$35 per exam session; however, operators are not charged the DEP \$35 exam fee until they apply for certification or sign up for their 5th exam session. If an operator is signed up for their 5th exam session, they will be notified by letter, phone and email that they are required to bring a check to the exam. If you do not bring a check to the exam, you will not be admitted into the exam or will not receive exam scores until payment is received.

EXAMS TO TAKE:

- Take the Part 1 General Exam with the appropriate subclasses (treatment at your system) to become certified. Operators taking subclasses without taking the general exam cannot become certified without passing both the general knowledge Part 1 and at least one subclass exam(s).
- **OR TAKE**
- **STANDALONE CERTIFICATIONS:** WDC and WDN (Small Systems), WE (Distribution), WWE4 (Collections) – Operators can be certified with one of the above stand-alone certifications. **DO NOT TAKE THE WDC OR WDN EXAM UNLESS YOUR SYSTEM HAS BEEN CLASSIFIED OR RECLASSIFIED BY DEP AS A WDC OR WDN. ONLY TAKE ONE.**
- **WE (water distribution) standalone OR can be combined with Water A, B, C, or D Class Size – example - WAE 1,2,3,4**
- **WWE4 (wastewater collections systems) can be combined with Wastewater A, B, C, or D Class Size – example - WWDE 1, 4**
- **WE – Water Distribution – can be combined with treatment subclasses 7 thru 14 only - example - WE 7,8,10**
- **WWE4 – Wastewater Collections stand-alone**
- **WDC Certification Stand-alone certification** – only applicable at small systems that meet all of the following conditions: **SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER EXAMS.**
 - System serves less than 500 people or has no more than 150 connections (whichever is less),
 - Source of water for the system is exclusively groundwater,
 - Requires only disinfection treatment, and
 - Not in violation of DEP regulations.
 - Provides the ability to operate a WDC system with gaseous chlorine, non-gaseous chemical, ultraviolet disinfection, and distribution.
 - WDC is not transferable or upgradable. You must take the water general and various subclasses to upgrade.
- **WDN Certification Stand-alone certification** – must meet all the conditions of the **WDC with no treatment** – Prior to signing up for the WDC or WDN, contact Laura Chambers at 717-772-5158 to verify that you work at a WDC or WDN system. There are very few systems designated as WDN. **SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER EXAMS.**
- **WDC AND WDN CERTIFICATES ARE NOT TRANSFERABLE** to a facility that does not meet the above criteria. We recommend that operators take the Part 1 General Exam and subclasses and apply for certification so they are not limited to working at a WDC or WDN facility. You cannot upgrade these type licenses. These certifications are only valid at facilities that meet the specific criteria.

- Operators need to know the treatment technologies their system uses so they can take the proper exams. **To take the proper exam(s) and receive the appropriate certificate(s), operators should check with their system owner, supervisor/superintendent, lead operator, NPDES or PWS Permit or DEP sanitarian/compliance specialist/operator to verify their systems class size (A, B, C, D, E) water system based on hydraulic design capacity; wastewater system based on permitted average daily discharge flow and/or treatment technologies (subclasses).**
- **Ensure all information is complete on the registration form. If you have a client ID, write it on the Test Selection Form. The client ID is on previous exam results letters or on your operator certificate if you are already certified. Ensure you complete the Test Selection Form legibly, PROVIDE your current address, AND A VALID CONTACT CELL OR WORK PHONE AND EMAIL ADDRESS in case Operator Certification needs to contact you regarding the exam session. It is very important to keep us updated with your current contact information. We may try to contact you to provide proper study material or to save you from losing your operator certification.**
- DEP only needs your SS# if you have never taken exams before. Once you have a client ID, please use that Client ID number on the registration forms for testing. Once you have a client ID, it is used as your DEP identifier. Provide this number when contacting the department.
- **Operators can take up to 8 tests in one 4-hour exam session.** The exam time on the exam registration form is ONLY a suggested time guideline. There are no restrictions on how many exam sessions you can sit for.
- **DO NOT SIGN UP FOR BACK TO BACK EXAM SESSIONS.** Give yourself one month in between exams to allow time to receive exam results so you are not taking the same exams twice. **This could result in the delay of your scores.**
- **If you need to cancel or change exams, contact the exam provider you registered with or DEP's Operator Certification Program at the above number.** No additions/changes will be accepted one week prior to the exam unless Operator Certification approves them. DEP exam fees will be waived for cancellations within 24 hours of exam or in case of emergency. **You will be charged by the exam provider and DEP if you do not show up to the exam session.**
- **Do NOT contact DEP Operator Certification for your exam scores unless it has been one month since you took the exam.** If you move, you must notify us immediately at the above number or you may not receive your certification paperwork. Operators must keep their address and contact information current with DEP or you will not receive operator paperwork.
- **Operator-In-Training (OIT)** - Operators may take exams without experience however, the Board will approve as an Operator in Training if you pass the exams and apply. Once you meet the experience requirement, the supervisor needs to write us a letter verifying the experience etc. The certificate will be issued without having to wait for another Board approval.
- **Laboratory Supervisor** - To qualify for this certification, you must take and pass the exam, already be a certified operator and have two years of experience in the testing and analysis of environmental samples for water and wastewater systems.
- **Upgrade Class Size and/or subclass(es)** - Operators do not need to take exams to upgrade the class certificate (size of system A, B, C, D). Operators do need to take subclass exams to upgrade subclass treatment technologies and apply to upgrade your current certificate. To obtain an **application for certification upgrade or downgrade to operate water or wastewater systems** in class only, contact Operator Certification at 717.787.5236 or go to the Operator Website and click on documents and forms.
- You can transfer class A, B, C, or D certificates to other facilities as long as your certificate class matches or is higher than the class of the facility where you are employed. To be an available operator, you must have a certificate matching the class size (or higher class size) and all subclass(es) of the facility where you are employed.
- **CHECK YOUR FACILITY PERMIT FOR CLASS SIZE AND TREATMENT PROCESSES USED.**

CONTACT OPERATOR CERTIFICATION STAFF at 717.787.5236 if you have exam and certification questions.

For more information, visit the Operator Certification website at www.depweb.state.pa.us/operatorcenter.