



## Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Operator Certification Office of Operator Certification (OOC)

# E-NEWS

Winter 2010

### Examinations

Examinations are given a minimum of twice a year.

For the October 2010 Examination, 756 individuals were approved to take the test.

The April 2011 examination deadline is February 1, 2011. The OCC strongly encourages applicants to apply early as we receive 500-600 applications the week before the deadline. If we do not receive your application until the week before the deadline and your application is not complete, there will not be enough time for us to notify you and get it corrected before the deadline. You will have to be scheduled for the next examination.

We saw the largest number of applications in history to test this past April with over 850 applications. The following chart shows the statistics for the April 2010 examination.

Examination Statistics	
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION APRIL 2010	
GRADE	%PASSED
I	66%
II	54%
III	52%
IV	49%
V	63%
I-V	58%
TOTAL NUMBERS APPROVED FOR EXAM: 860 NO SHOWS: 85 TOOK EXAM: 775 PASSED EXAM: 448	

The OOC cannot endorse specific study materials, however, for your convenience; OOC has compiled a list of references from which study materials may be

selected on our website at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/docs/study.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/study.pdf)

For the next examination schedule and final filing dates, please visit our website at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/docs/exam\\_sched2010\\_11.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/exam_sched2010_11.pdf)

### Current California Operators

Certification Statistics	
ACTIVE OPERATOR CERTIFICATES AS OF SEPTEMBER 2010	
GRADE	OPERATORS
OIT	577
I	852
II	1549
III	1430
IV	531
V	869
TOTAL OPERATORS 5808	

### Things To Know

Did you know? All of our applications are now available in fill-in and print format on our website. They can be found at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/form.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/form.shtml)

Please use these forms as they are the most current versions. Also please include your e-mail address on all correspondence with the OOC.



Our website is currently being redesigned. It is being designed to be more user friendly and an event calendar is being added.

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## Operator-In-Training Program

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A person who meets all applicable requirements may become certified as an OIT to gain necessary experience to become a certified operator. An OIT must be directly supervised by a certified operator at the same or a higher grade.

Applicants for Grade I OIT certificates may, but are not required to, pass the Grade I examination. However, a Grade I OIT certificate cannot be renewed unless the applicant has passed the Grade I examination.

Applicants for Grades II through V OIT certificates must pass the examination to be eligible for the grade at which they are applying.

OIT certificates are valid for up to two years and may be renewed once if the applicant has passed an examination and the examination results have not expired. Examination results are valid for four years.

OIT certificates are issued in the name of the applicant and the WWTP and mailed to the mailing address of the employing WWTP. OIT certificates are plant-specific and are only valid while the OIT is employed at the plant for which the certificate was issued. If an OIT stops working for any reason or has a break in employment, it is the responsibility of the Chief Plant Operator (CPO) to return the certificate to the OOC immediately. The CPO must also certify the type and hours of experience the OIT gained while working at the WWTP.

Failure to immediately return an OIT certificate to the OOC after the OIT stops working for any reason jeopardizes the OIT's ability to obtain a new OIT certificate at a later time.

If you have additional questions, regarding the OIT process, please contact the OOC.

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## Regulations

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The State Water Board is in the process of drafting proposed amendments to the Operator Certification Regulations, title 23, division 3, chapter 26, of the California Code of Regulations. The proposed regulations are not yet available, but once they are a notification will be sent to those on the e-mail list. To receive updates on this process by e-mail, subscribe to the WWTP certification mailing list at: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/swrcb\\_subscribe.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml). Check the "Wastewater Operator Certification" topic under the "Financial Assistance (Grants & Loans) Topic" category.

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## You've Got Mail!

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Upon request, the OOC will provide a mailing list of operators who have given their permission to release their names, addresses, and certificate grade to employers for recruitment purposes. To request the list, please fill out the Request for Mailing List. The form is available at: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/docs/forms/requestmailinglist.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/forms/requestmailinglist.pdf)

Do you have a question that needs answering? E-mail your question(s) to: [OpCertProgram@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:OpCertProgram@waterboards.ca.gov)

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## What Delays An Application?

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- No duty statement on official letterhead and/or the duty statement is not signed by the CPO
- Missing payment
- No original signature/s
- Incomplete application
- Missing high school diploma
- Missing transcripts
- Current CPO information

Something to keep in mind, processing time on any application may take up to 30 days. Please be patient as we process on a first-come, first-serve basis.

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## Reminders

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For those WWTP operators whose certificates expire on June 30, 2011, the OOC sent you a notice at least 60 calendar days prior to the expiration of your certificate. Failure to receive the notification does not relieve an operator from the responsibility of renewing his or her certificate on or before the expiration date. Any operator who fails to renew his or her certificate before the expiration date will be subject to a late fee. To ensure you receive a reminder of all upcoming expiration dates, subscribe to the WWTP certification mailing list at: [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/swrcb\\_subscribe.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml). Check the "Wastewater Operator Certification" topic under the "Financial Assistance (Grants & Loans) Topic" category.

When submitting your application for certification, remember to attach your duty statement if you are currently working in wastewater operations. Your duty statement must be on official letterhead and/or signed by your CPO. If you are retired or are not working in wastewater operations a duty statement is not required.

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## How to Reach Us

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### Staff

Doug Wilson – Program Manager  
Christine Gordon – Program Supervisor  
Kathy Bare – Technical Staff  
Kelli Garver – Program Analyst  
Debbie Zuccala – Operator Certification  
Valerie Gregory – Examinations  
John Marcell – Operator-in-Training Certification

State Water Resources Control Board  
Office of Operator Certification  
P.O Box 944212  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2120  
(916) 341-5819  
(916) 341-5734

Email: [OpCertProgram@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:OpCertProgram@waterboards.ca.gov)  
Or Internet:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/)

The OOC staff is committed to serving the needs of the operator. Please keep in mind that depending on the current workload responses may be delayed. We encourage you to visit the OOC website first for general information.

Is there something you would like to see in our next newsletter? Send an email to:  
[OpCertProgram@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:OpCertProgram@waterboards.ca.gov). We value your suggestions, stories and ideas....

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## Tell A Fellow Operator....

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To receive future editions of E-News and other operator certification information by e-mail, subscribe to the WWTP certification mailing list at:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/swrcb\\_subscribe.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml). Check the "Wastewater Operator Certification" topic under the "Financial Assistance (Grants & Loans) Categories.

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## References & Frequent Questions

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OCC website:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/)

Forms:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/form.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/form.shtml)

Certification Requirements:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/docs/req\\_by\\_grade\\_cert102009.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/req_by_grade_cert102009.pdf)

Regulations / Training / California WWTP's:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/pub.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/pub.shtml)

Exams and Deadlines:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/docs/exam\\_sched2010\\_11.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/exam_sched2010_11.pdf)

Sample Questions:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/samples.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/samples.shtml)

Training Directory:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/docs/trngdir.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/trngdir.pdf)

Site Index and Frequently asked questions:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/site\\_index.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/site_index.shtml)

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## Office Of Enforcement

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If you have concerns that someone may be operating a WWTP without proper certification, you may file a complaint at:  
[http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/database/CalEPA\\_Complaint/index.cfm](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/database/CalEPA_Complaint/index.cfm)

### Recent Violations Observed:

- A small community plant hiring uncertified staff ;
- A plant showing the same number for sampling results, day after day, month after month;
- A plant proudly showing regulatory inspectors monthly reporting forms that are pre-filled out; and
- Plants found in complete disarray, no records or log books kept of day to day activities, maintenance is poor or non-existent, operators on site un-familiar with proper sampling techniques.

These are actual scenarios that have been observed by staff at the State Water Board and have resulted in enforcement action. All of these violations are preventable.

So what can you do to make sure you and your facility are in compliance? Most importantly, all staff should be aware of these potential violations and enforcement actions, and they should be familiar with discharge and other regulatory requirements that govern operation of their wastewater treatment plant. Operators should be in regular communication with management and the owner (city, municipality, community services district, etc.) of the facility. When violations occur, operators should communicate with the owner, make sure the owner is aware of the violations, and make sure the owner is

taking the necessary steps to correct future violations. Operators should document these communications and the proposed corrective actions show that they are taking what steps they can to make sure the facilities they operate remain in compliance and are operating properly.

If you have questions regarding these matters, or would like to make a complaint, please contact Mark Bradley with the State Water Board's Office of Enforcement at 916-341-5891 or [mbradley@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:mbradley@waterboards.ca.gov). The Operator Certification regulations are available on our website at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/docs/regs.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/regs.pdf)

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS 2009-2010

Date	Operator	Grade	Agency	Violations	Action
12/09	Randy Johnson	Grade V	Discovery Bay WWTP	Inadequate Supervision of OIT's, Undertified Operations, Willfully or Negligently Allowing Permit Violations, Failure to Use Good Care or Judgment	Reduction of Certification to G-II for 6 months
4/09	John Dobson	Grade IV	City of Willows WWTP	Willfully or Negligently Allowing Permit Violations, Failure to Use Good Care or Judgment	Reduction of Certification to G-I for 2 years.
4/09	Tito Balling	Grade II	California Water Services, Inc.	Inadequate Supervision of OIT's, Uncertified Operations, Willfully or Negligently Allowing Permit Violations, Failure to Use Good Care or Judgment	Reduction of Certification to G-I for 1 year, \$10,000 penalty.
11/09	Jared Steeley	Grade II	City of Hughson WWTP	Submitting false or misleading information	Letter of Reprimand
1/10	David Chase	Grade I	City of Hughson WWTP	Submitting false or misleading information	Relinquishment of Certification for 2 years, must begin program as an OIT.