WASTEWATER TREATMENT

The treatment of wastewater (sewage) is vital to ensure the quality of California's ground water and water ways, maintain public and environmental health.

There are over 1,100 wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) throughout California that clean the increasing amount of wastewater produced by households, businesses, and industry throughout the state. With these increases in wastewater generated by the population and industry growth, there is an increased need for WWTPs and the people to operate the plants.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT OPERATORS

WWTP operators are the individuals responsible for operating the equipment that is used to clean and improve the quality of wastewater. Current state law requires these professionals be certified as a WWTP operator by the State of California. The Wastewater Operator Certification Program (WWOCP), at the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is the program responsible for administering this certification program.

Once the treated wastewater meets certain requirements, it is discharged to land, rivers, streams, or the ocean.

WHAT WE DO

The WWOCP:

- Issues certifications for WWTP operators
- Issues certifications for operators-in-training (OIT)
- Conducts examinations throughout the State of California
- Renews Grades I – V wastewater and OIT certifications
- Classifies WWTPs
- Issues credentials for Contract Operators
- Issues provisional operator certifications

HOW TO BECOME CERTIFIED

There are five levels of certification, Grade I - V. The process of becoming certified is a three-part process.

- Operators must obtain at least 1,800 hours working in wastewater operations as an OIT.
- Operators must take and pass the state exam for the grade level of certification they are pursuing. Passing exam results are valid for four years.
- After passing the state exam and completing the required amount of qualifying experience, submit an application for certification. Submit supporting documents (duty statement and educational documentation) along with the applicable fees for review and approval.

Once approved, certifications are issued for a period of three years. To renew the certificate, operators must submit a renewal certification application and fee prior to the certificate expiration date.

EXAMPLES OF OPERATIONAL DUTIES

- adjusting gauges
- adjusting dials and valves
- taking effluent samples
- adding chemicals
- monitoring Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system
- reading and monitoring gauges
- visual inspections of operational equipment

WWOCP STATISTICS

- Over 1,700 examinees per year
- 6,200 certified operators (including OIT's)
- Over 2,000 certifications renewed per year
- Over 1,100 classified WWTP's
- 70 Contract Operator Credentials

ABOUT OUR EXAMS

The State Water Board has changed the way we administer Operator Certification examinations by moving from paper-pencil testing to computer-based testing beginning in February 2021. https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/cbt_process_overview.pdf

CLASSIFICATION OF WWTPs

WWTPs are classified into five different levels: Class I- Class V. Classifications of a WWTP are issued based on the treatment processes used and the amount of wastewater the WWTP is designed to treat. The operator in charge of the plant, called the Chief Plant Operator (CPO) must hold a valid certificate at or above the level the WWTP is classified.

Class I - Primary, Conventional Treatment Pond

Class II - Primary, Biofiltration, Modified Treatment Pond

Class III - Primary, Biofiltration, Activated Sludge, Sequencing Batch Reactor, Tertiary

Class IV - Primary, Biofiltration, Activated Sludge, Sequencing Batch Reactor, Tertiary

Class V - Biofiltration, Activated Sludge, Sequencing Batch Reactor, Tertiary

Note: All water recycling treatment plants are WWTPs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information and program updates, visit the WWOCP website at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/operator_certification.shtml

Applications: the OIT application and additional information is located under the **Certifications** tab >**Operator-In-Training** or at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/prog rams/operator_certification/oit_info.shtml

The Training Directory is located under the **General Information** tab >Training Directory:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/prog rams/operator_certification/docs/trngdir.pdf

The Frequently Asked Questions(FAQs) are located under the **General Information** tab > FAQ or at:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/docs/faqs.pdf

Forms are located under the Forms tab or at:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/pro grams/operator_certification/form.shtml

Apply for an exam through the online portal today!
https://wbapps.waterboards.ca.gov/opcert/

Office of Operator Certification
Wastewater Treatment Plant
Operator Certification Program

HOW TO BECOME A CERTIFIED WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR

CERTIFIED

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REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARDS