

FAQ Sheet

Nevada Water Environment Association

Certification Programs

We inform, educate, train & certify.

Welcome to the world of water! You are one step closer to becoming certified in the State of Nevada. Our mission is to connect water professionals; enrich the expertise of water professionals; increase the awareness of the impact and value of water; and provide a platform for water sector innovation.

Wastewater Certification Programs available through NWEA

- Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator (Grade I - IV)
- Non-regulatory Certifications*
 - Plant Maintenance Technologist (Grade 1 - 3)
 - Wastewater Quality Analyst (Grade 1 - 4)
 - Collection System Operator (Grade 1 - 4)
 - Industrial Waste Inspector (Grade 1 - 4)
 - Industrial Waste Operator (Grade 1 - 4)

State of Nevada Division of Environmental Protection NAC 445A.287-292

Wastewater Operator Certification Program
Bureau of Water Pollution Control
Nevada Division of Environmental Protection

901 South Stewart Street, Suite 4001
Carson City, Nevada 89701



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*Non-regulatory certifications are programs administered by the NWEA Certification Board and are not regulated by NDEP.

Definitions

Program Administrator

A contracted position overseen by the Board to perform certification activities.

Certification Board

Means the Nevada Certification Board for Water Professionals

Certification

Means certification of competency issued by the State of Nevada stating that the applicant has met the requirements of a specific classification. It specifies the name and grade of the person certified, as well as the date the certification was issued.

Continuing Education Unit (CEU)

1 CEU is equivalent to 10 contact hours.

Full Time or Equivalent (FTE)

Means qualifying direct or related experience. Direct experience is experience performing the actual job itself. Related (or indirect) experience is experience that may be similar to duties performed, but not directly associated with the certification discipline.

NAC

Means the Nevada Administrative Code.

NRS

Means the Nevada Revised Statutes.

NPDES Permit

Means the national permit program that addresses water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants to waters of the US. Stands for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

Operator

Means any person, other than a supervisor, who is working as an operator of a plant for sewage treatment.

Postsecondary

Means the education level that follows the successful completion of secondary education, often referred to as high school. Postsecondary education includes universities and colleges, as well as trade and vocational schools (NAC 445A.2862).

Restricted

Means a person who has passed their certification exam but has not met all the education and/or experience requirements to become a certified operator.

Rules and Regulations

Means rules, regulations and policy for certification of treatment plant operators.

Water Professionals International (WPI) - formerly Associated Boards of Certification (ABC)

WPI offers a Professional Operator program for operators in wastewater treatment, collection, water treatment and distribution. WPI also offers voluntary certification programs for industrial waste operators, water and wastewater laboratory analysts, plant maintenance technologists, and biosolids land appliers.

"Success does not come overnight; it is the sum of repeated small efforts."

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the format of examination questions?

- The exam is multiple-choice. Each question has four options (one correct answer and three distractors).
- The exam has a total of 110 questions.
- Exam is offered in written and computerized formats.

How long will the exam last?

There is a three hour time limit for the exam.

What do I need to complete in order to take the exam?

- For wastewater operator certification, an applicant needs to submit a completed application form/documentation and pay a nonrefundable fee to the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP).
- For non-regulatory certifications, an applicant needs to submit a completed application form/documentation and pay a nonrefundable fee Nevada Water Environment Association (NWEA).

Why are there 110 questions on my certification exam?

- Each standardized exam form for Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator and Collection System Operator includes 10 extra unscored questions that have not been used on previous versions of the exam. These are known as “pre-test” items and allow WPI to gather valuable data about the new items before they are included as scored items on future exams. Pre-test items are unidentified and scattered throughout the exam to ensure candidates answer them with the same care in which they address scored items. The pre-test items are not included in the candidate’s final score.
- Credentialing standards provide for two hours to complete a 100 question exam. Nevada allows three hours. Even with the 10 added questions, more than adequate time is provided to complete the exam.
- WPI’s exam development process ensures that qualified candidates are validating pre-test items. It also ensures Nevada’s ongoing participation in shaping future standardized certification exams.

How should I prepare for the exam?

WPI recommends that you review the Need-to-Know Criteria for your exam to identify those areas for which you may need additional preparation. A list of reference materials for each exam is included in each Need-to-Know Criteria and in the Examination Resources section of their website. You may also wish to familiarize yourself with the Formula/Conversional Table that will be provided for your use during the exam.

<https://www.gowpi.org/services/testing-services/need-to-know-criteria/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What counts as a postsecondary course?

A post-secondary course is a college level course comprised of at least 36 hours (3.6 CEUs) of instruction (classroom, correspondence, or online) that the Board deems relevant (i.e. wastewater treatment, chemistry, biology, math, etc).

Which postsecondary courses count towards CEUs for Initial Education and Renewals*?

- College Courses Earning Full Credit (1.5 CEUs per semester credit):
- College Chemistry - up to 12
- Mathematics area: Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Statistics - up to 12 CEUs. Does not include basic, introductory, or business math
- Biological Science area: Microbiology, Pathogenic Bacteriology, etc. - up to 9
- General Physics - up to 9
- Engineering courses: Fluid Mechanics, Hydraulics, and Engineering courses not directly
- College Courses Earning Half Credit (0.7 CEU per semester credit):
- Technical Writing - up to 3
- Public Speaking - up to 3

*Education for renewals must occur within two year certification window.

Can I retake a wastewater postsecondary course?

Yes. After the next recertification cycle (after 2 years).

Where can we get CEUs or postsecondary courses?

- You can access approved CEUs or postsecondary courses by going to our website, www.nvwea.org.
- For CEUs, click on "Training" tab and select "Approved Training - CEUs".
- For postsecondary courses, click on "Training" tab and select "Approved Training - postsecondary".
 - Postsecondary education includes universities and colleges, as well as trade and vocational schools

Is there a time limit for initial education?

No. There is no time limit for initial education. Continuing education needs to occur within the two year window between renewals.

Do college degrees count as full-time equivalent (FTE) experience?

No. College degrees (and other education) do not count as full-time experience; however, a college degree can be used for initial education requirements. Submit a copy of your unofficial transcripts to the Program Administrator for review.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What happens if my license is suspended/expired?

A certification will be deemed suspended if it is not renewed by the expiration date. Certificants must submit their application, supporting documentation (continuing education), and fee prior to the expiration date. A Certification will be deemed decertified if it is not renewed within six months following the expiration date. Once decertified, the certification may no longer be renewed.

Can I use safety courses as educational credit for renewal?

Up to 20% of the total contact hours may come from safety classes, however no safety classes are specifically required. The Certification Board has sole discretion in determining what constitutes wastewater related training and what constitutes safety related training.

How much related experience can I get approved towards certification?

The Board will review applicant's experience. If approved, the Board will allow up to six months related experience.

Where can I find my plant's classification?

Ask your supervisor to locate on your facility's NPDES permit or contact NDEP for more information.

Are you a veteran?

- If you have served in the military in any of an MOS listed in the US EPA document "*From M.O.S. to J-O-B: A Guide for Applying Military Occupational Specialties (M.O.S) to Civilian Drinking Water and Wastewater Operations*", you may be eligible to receive additional experience toward your certification.
- If your MOS was a US Navy Rating "*Utilitiesman (UT)*" or US Air Force Specialty Code: *3E4X1 – Water And Fuel Systems Maintenance*", you may be eligible to receive full credit for the duties that you performed.
- Veteran experience is currently limited to Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, Collection System Operator and Plant Maintenance Technologist certifications.
- Veteran Exam Reimbursement
 - The NWEA has been approved through the LACAS program. Qualifying veterans can now have their certification exam application fees reimbursed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.
 - If you are a veteran who has taken a certification examination any time after 8/20/13 you may be eligible to have your certification fee reimbursed by the Department of Veterans Affairs.