



# How to Become a Certified Water or Water Reclamation Operator

*Serve your community by helping to ensure people receive safe drinking water and wastewater is discharged in an environmentally safe manner.*

## Eligibility

To become a certified Class A, I, II, III or IV Water Supply, Water Distribution, Water Reclamation or Wastewater Collection operator in the State of Ohio, you must apply for and pass the state operator certification exam and document the appropriate level of hands on work experience.

To apply for the exam you must have a high school diploma, or the equivalent, and the amount of operating experience identified in the table to the right. If you do not have the operating experience required to become certified at the Class A, Class I, II, or III level, you are still approved to take the exam.

If you pass the exam, you will be designated as an "operator in training" (OIT) and allowed up to 60 months to fulfill the operating experience requirement. OIT status is not available for a Class IV certification.

Classification	Operating Experience
A*	1,040 hours
I	12 months
II*	24 months
III*	48 months
IV**	24 months holding a valid Class III, while obtaining management experience at a Class III or IV facility

\* Reductions available for education and course completion. Contact Ohio EPA for details.  
 \*\* More information about the Class IV exam can be found online on the [Ohio EPA exam information page](#)

## Third Party Exams

Ohio EPA offers professional water and wastewater operator certification examinations through our approved third-party examination provider, Water Professionals International (WPI). To schedule an examination an operator would click [here](#) and sign up to take an examination. An operator should select "Water/Wastewater", "Ohio EPA" and then the level of exam they wish to take. For any questions regarding WPI examinations, please contact the operator certification unit or visit the WPI website for more information: <https://www.gowpi.org/>

Once an operator achieves a score of 70 or above and can document the appropriate level of hands-on experience, the operator can use the Ohio EPA eBusiness center to apply for certification. Instructions for applying for certification can be found at the following link: [Instructions for applying for certification](#)

All operators who submit a third-party application for certification shall pay a \$45 non-refundable applicant fee. This does not include any fees associated with the third-party examination provider.

## Preparing for the Exam

The operator certification website includes references used to create exam questions, need to know criteria and formulas that may help you prepare for the exam. Ohio EPA does not require completion of any coursework prior to applying for an exam. However, many people believe this helps when preparing for an exam. Ohio EPA does not offer exam study courses or practice exams. However, there are a number of training providers that do offer courses.

## Operating Experience

The following indicates types of operating experience that can be used toward Ohio EPA’s experience credit requirement for certification as a water or wastewater operator. See OAC Rule 3745-7-01 for the definition of operating experience. Experience for drinking water related examinations may only be obtained at public water systems.

Counts	Counts for a maximum of 25 percent of requirement, if job responsibilities consist solely of one or more of the following:	Doesn’t Count
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily Plant Operations/Maintenance.</li> <li>• Military experience (potable water/wastewater) (DD214 Form or JST required).</li> <li>• On-site investigations/inspections that require coordination of work with the active treatment processes, sewerage or distribution systems (hours must be documented).</li> <li>• Troubleshooting plant operations at a public water system or treatment works.</li> <li>• Industrial wastewater treatment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Onsite SCADA system monitoring.</li> <li>• Sludge handling and sludge hauling, if part of a public water system or treatment works</li> <li>• Laboratory work at the lab of an owner of a public water system or treatment works.</li> <li>• Construction inspection and engineering design that require coordination of the inspection or design with the operation of the active treatment process, sewerage or distribution systems.</li> <li>• Distribution or collection experience when applying for supply or treatment licenses.</li> <li>• Source water protection and watershed management.</li> <li>• Pretreatment if part of the treatment works or sewerage system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clerical duties.</li> <li>• Commercial lab work.</li> <li>• Sludge handling and hauling, if <i>not</i> part of a treatment works.</li> <li>• Investigations/inspections or construction inspection/engineering design that <u>do not</u> require coordination of work with the active treatment processes, collection or distribution systems.</li> <li>• Academic Research.</li> <li>• Meter Reading only.</li> <li>• Off-site monitoring of SCADA.</li> <li>• Laborers, even at plant, if only duties are mowing grass, painting, etc.</li> <li>• Septage hauling.</li> </ul>

## To Obtain More Information

Visit our certification website [here](#), email the operator certification unit at [opcert@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:opcert@epa.ohio.gov) or call our toll-free hotline at 1-866-411-OPCT (6728).