

**Ohio Environmental
Protection Agency
Operator Rules & Requirements**

**Required Training:
This training is required prior to
signing any operator certification
application.**



Section 1

RULES GOVERNING CERTIFIED OPERATORS

CERTIFIED OPERATOR RULES

- The following will highlight important rules applicable to certified operators and outline important updates. This is not a comprehensive list of all changes nor is it a full explanation of all rules. Please refer to [Ohio Administrative Code 3745-7: Operator Certification for Public Water Systems and Wastewater Treatment Works](#) for a complete list of all applicable rules. All certified professional operators are expected to have read and understood the rules within these chapters.
- **New provisions in Chapter 3745-7 became effective on November 7, 2024 unless otherwise noted.**

3745-7-01 OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

DEFINITIONS

This chapter defines important terms relative to professional operators, training providers, and facilities.

- Important updates:
 - Satellite Collection System is defined
 - A ‘year’ when referring to education reductions is now defined.
 - A new certificate named ‘Facility Specific’ is defined.

3745-7-02 CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS OF RECORD

This chapter outlines the requirement of a public water system, sewerage system or treatment works to have a certified operator of record (ORC).

Important updates:

- If a public water system, sewerage system, or treatment works enter into a contract with a professional operator of record, the contract must clearly define the responsibilities of both the operator and owner.
- Contract Operators/Operating Companies are required to submit ORC notification forms when being added or removed as ORC from a facility.
- An operator with an expired certificate CANNOT act as a professional operator of record.

3745-7-03 PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM CLASSIFICATION AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Recent rule update:

- Clarifications on staffing reductions regarding fluoride and chlorine monitoring.

3745-7-04 TREATMENT WORKS AND SEWERAGE SYSTEM CLASSIFICATION AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Important updates:

- The ORC (or appropriately certified professional operator) of a Class I sewerage system will visit the system at least 3 days a week. ORC (or appropriate certified professional operator) of a Class II sewerage system will visit the system at least 5 days a week.
- Added classification criteria for satellite collection systems.

3745-7-03/04 PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM CLASSIFICATION AND STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

- At Class II, III and IV facilities a backup operator 1 class lower than the facility may replace the ORC for up to 30 consecutive days without notification to Ohio EPA provided the facility has an active ORC. If the only ORC leaves suddenly, retires, etc, Ohio EPA must be consulted and other provisions in the rules may be used.
- Operational records must show anytime a backup operator is being used to meet the minimum staffing requirement.
- Any professional operator fulfilling the role of a backup operator will be held responsible for any violations which occur during the time they are acting as ORC.

FEDERAL HOLIDAY EXEMPTION TABLE

PWS and Wastewater Works Classification	ORC Minimum Staffing Requirements		
	Normal Requirement	Days required in a holiday week	Hours required in a holiday week
Class 2	5 days per week for a minimum of 20 hours per week	4	16
Class 3 and Class 4	5 days per week for a minimum of 40 hours per week	4	32

Distribution and Collection System Classification	ORC Minimum Staffing Requirements	
	Normal visit requirement	Visit requirement in a holiday week
Class 1	3 visits per week	3 visits per week
Class 2	5 visits per week	4 visits per week

3745-7-03/04

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Important updates:

- Class II, III, IV treatment plants, or Class II distribution/collection systems, may be exempt from staffing requirements on **federal holidays**, up to a maximum of twenty per cent of the weekly minimum staffing requirement (both in days and hours), without prior agency approval, provided the following criteria are met:
 - (i) System is not under formal enforcement.
 - (ii) The operator of record, or appropriately certified backup operator, can respond in person to an emergency within one hour.

3745-7-03/04

STAFFING REQUIREMENTS

Important updates:

- An operator of record of a class III or IV treatment plant, may attend offsite meetings related to operations and administration of the public water system, for a maximum of ten percent of the facility's weekly minimum staffing requirement (in hours), without prior agency approval, provided the following criteria are met:
 - (i) System is not under formal enforcement.
 - (ii) The operator of record, or appropriately certified backup operator, can respond in person to an emergency within one hour.
 - (iii) The operator of record must record the offsite meeting in the logbook.
 - (iv) The system does not have a minimum staffing reduction approved in accordance with paragraph (C)(3)(b) of this rule.

3745-7-05 CLASSIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

Update

- The term 'Wastewater Treatment' on certificates was replaced with 'Water Reclamation'.
- 'Facility specific' was added to the list of available certificates.

3745-7-06 CERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS

- Operating experience requirements for Class II, III and IV certificates have been reduced by 12 months. The new operating experience requirements are:
 - Class II – 24 months
 - Class III – 48 months
 - Class IV – Class III certificate and 2 years of management experience at a Class III or IV plant. Management is defined in OAC Rule 3745-7-01.
- Class III operators may sit for an examination prior to meeting the operating experience requirements.

3745-7-06 CERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS

- Facility Specific Certification:
 - Only available for operators working at Class III and IV facilities
 - Intended for operators in positions where experience only counts for 25% of the operating experience .
 - Must pass the appropriate level of exam.
 - Document an appropriate number of years working a position covered by the 25% provision
 - Operator of Record, or a certified professional operator in management at the facility, must certify the applicant's ability to oversee the technical operation of the plant (form is available online [here](#))
 - Limited to serving only as a backup operators, cannot be designated as an ORC.
 - Can apply for a Class I, II, or III professional certificate once operating experience is obtained.

3745-7-07 PROFESSIONAL OPERATOR IN TRAINING

This chapter explains the professional operator in training (OIT) status.

- A professional operator in training is not certified and shall not act as a professional operator of record.
- Successfully passing an approved examination for a class A, I, II or III certification results in an applicant being acknowledged as a professional operator in training. Passing a WPI examination by scheduling through this [link](#) will grant OIT status. Ohio EPA does not send correspondence when you pass a WPI examination. To become certified, an operator must submit an application for certification through the eBusiness center.

3745-7-07 PROFESSIONAL OPERATOR IN TRAINING

Updates:

- Class A, I, II, and now Class III applicants can be OITs.
- An operator can now be an OIT for five years.

3745-7-09 RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWNERS, CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS AND CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS OF RECORD

Records shall be maintained in hard bound books or computerized logs, which automatically document the date, time and person making the entry and prevent erasure or deletion of data.

Dates and times of arrival shall be documented in military time for the professional operator of record and any other operator required by Chapter 3745-7.

A log book should contain detailed information on the duties performed by the operator of record.

- Detailed operating information.
- Treatment adjustments.
- Chemical changes.
- Maintenance activities.
- Requests for repair, replacement and maintenance.

3745-7-09 RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWNERS, CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS AND CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS OF RECORD

Duties of a Professional Operator of Record

- Responsible and effective onsite management and supervision of the technical operation of the public water system, treatment works, or sewerage system.
- Immediately notifying the permittee or owner of a public water system, sewerage system, or treatment works, and ensuring the agency and, if applicable, the local regulatory agency, is notified of items that require notification in accordance with Chapter 6109. or 6111. of the Revised Code, the rules adopted thereunder, or the facility's NPDES permit.
- Ensuring the recordkeeping requirements of this rule are being met.
- Each professional operator of record identified in accordance with rule 3745-7-02 of the Administrative Code and each certified professional operator acting as a backup for a facility identified in accordance with rule 3745-7-03 or rule 3745-7-04 of the Administrative Code, shall ensure that the facility's minimum staffing requirements are being met either by themselves or in conjunction with other professional operators working at the facility.
- Displaying a copy of the facility specific or professional operator's valid certificate and renewal card for public examination at the treatment plant or principal office of the owner.
- Reporting minimum staffing times to the agency in a format accepted by the director.

3745-7-09 RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWNERS, CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS AND CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS OF RECORD

Duties of a Certified Professional Operator or Facility Specific Operator

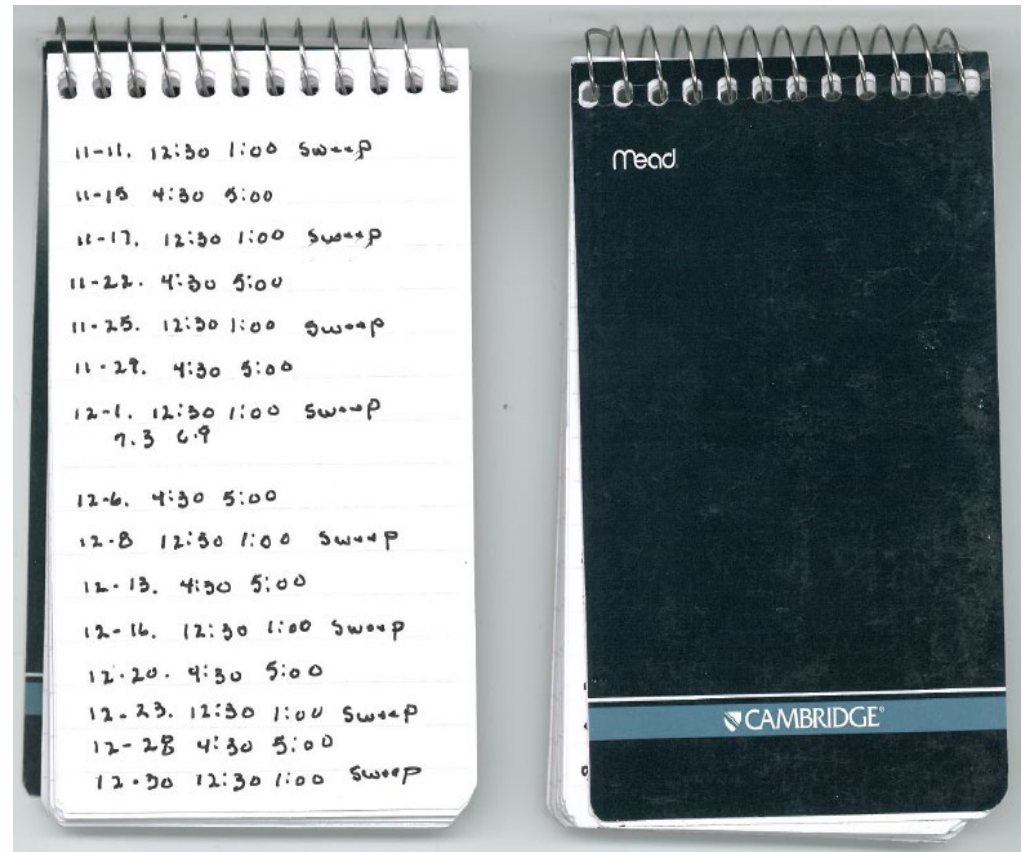
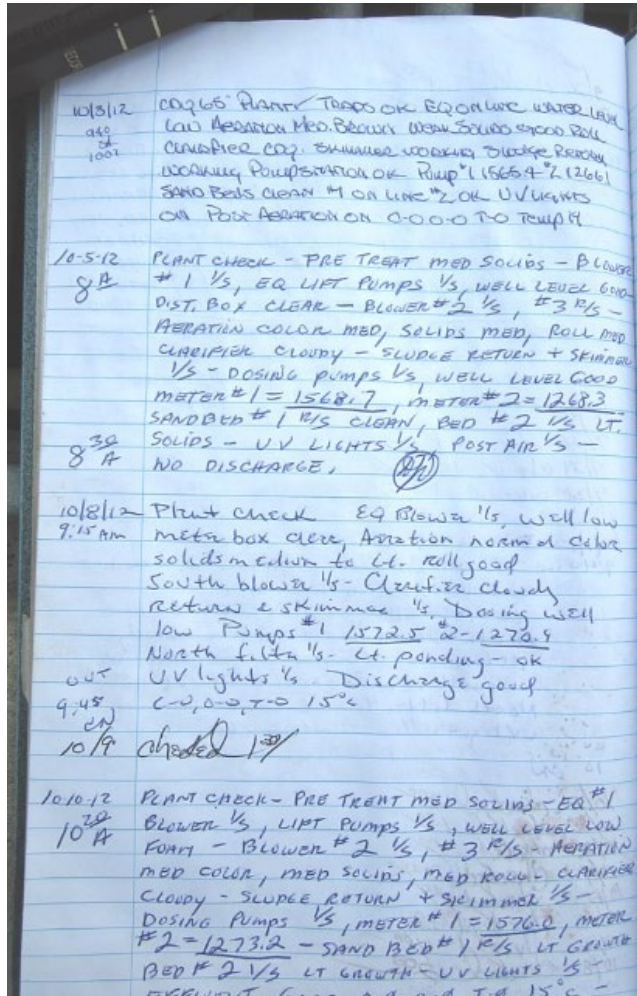
- Perform duties in a responsible and professional manner consistent with standard operating procedures and best management practices.
- Operate and maintain public water systems, sewerage systems, treatment works, and appurtenances so as not to endanger the health or safety of persons working in or around the facility, the public at large, or the environment due to negligence or incompetence.
- Report all instances of noncompliance with applicable regulations to the professional operator of record or facility supervisor.
- Record information required in accordance with paragraphs (A)(3)(c) to (A)(3)(f) of this rule.

OPERATOR LOG BOOKS

- Only one operator of record, or backup operator, can be used to meet the minimum staffing requirement during the same time period.
- For example, ‘Operator Jim’ is on site from 8a-10a and ‘Operator Bob’ is also onsite from 8a-10a on the same day. This does not equal four hours. Only 2 hours can be used to meet the minimum staffing requirement.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD AND BAD LOG BOOKS

On the left is an example of an **acceptable** log book. On the right is an example of an **inadequate** log book.



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3745-7-15 EXPIRATION AND RENEWAL OF PROFESSIONAL OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

- This rule outlines the renewal procedure, explains the responsibility of a professional operator to renew their license, outlines the responsibility of the training provider and indicates the required number of hours for each license type and level.
- Important changes:
 - Requires operators to renew via the eBusiness Center website.
 - Holds training providers more responsible if the rules are not followed.
 - Provides clarification of internet, webinar, and correspondence course requirements.
 - Requires the completion of this training during renewal.
 - Requires training providers to upload attendance records within 60 days of completion.
 - Provides expiration dates for courses approved by Green Leaf training providers.
- An operator with an expired certificate CANNOT act as a professional operator of record. The operator must have their renewal application approved and their certificate active before serving as an ORC.

3745-7-17 & 3745-7-18

- 3745-7-17 Professional operator certification fees
 - Outlines the fees associated with exams, reciprocity, and renewal.
 - Denied reciprocity applications can now have the fees transferred to an application for certification.
 - Fees are nonrefundable.
- 3745-7-18 Conduct during the application and examination process
 - Discusses inappropriate behavior and consequence, if violations occur.
 - Falsification of records or employment history and/or cheating will result in revocation of licensure and restriction from future examinations or licensure.

3745-7-20 CERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS WHO PASS AN EXAMINATION FROM AN APPROVED EXAMINATION PROVIDER

This chapter outlines the actions necessary to obtain certification after passing an approved exam.

- An application must be submitted, within five years of passing the exam, via the eBusiness Center.
- You must submit proof of passing the examination with your application.
- You are an operator in training (OIT) for five years after you pass an approved exam and are gaining the required operating experience.

3745-7-21 CONTRACT OPERATIONS COMPANIES AND CONTRACTED PROFESSIONAL OPERATORS.

This rule provides requirements for contract operating companies and contracted professional operators.

- Operators wishing to be contract operators must [submit an application](#), and sample contract, for approval at least thirty days prior to initiating contract operations.
- Contracted professional operators and contract operation companies must apply for approval and provide a sample contract which outlines the minimum expectations and explains who is responsible for and the minimum expectations for the following:
 - Operator of record of the facility.
 - Minimum staffing hours.
 - Emergency operations.
 - Maintenance (routine and preventative).
 - Ensure operators comply with 3745 of the Administrative Code.
 - Sharing of compliance letters between owner and operator.

3745-7-21 CONTINUED

All contract operation companies or contracted professional operators shall comply with the following:

- Ensure that certified professional operators under their employment comply with provisions of Chapters 3745., 6111., and 6109. of the Revised Code.
- If required by the facility owner or agency, respond to emergencies within one hour.
- Provide an appropriately certified operator if the listed operator of record is unavailable.
- Provide a report of the facilities the company/operator is contracted to operate by June 30th of each year.
- Maintain a copy of the contract onsite for inspection by Ohio EPA.
- Maintain a copy of the contract for a minimum of 3 years after the expiration of the contract.
- Ensure that all relevant personnel, including the professional operators and owner, are notified of written correspondence from or to the Ohio EPA.

A contract operator or contract professional operator may be held liable for violations.

Failure to comply with the rules of this chapter and Chapter 6111. and 6109. of the Revised Code may result in withdrawal of approval to be a contract operator or operating company.

3745-83-01

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Provides guidance on treatment and distribution requirements.

- Drinking Water System Components must meet ANSI/NSF Standard 61.
- Must maintain 20 PSI at all points in the distribution system.
- All equipment must be maintained to ensure intended function.
 - If the equipment cannot function as originally intended, then it must be repaired or replaced.
- Ohio EPA must be notified of any disruption of service, e.g. line breaks, treatment failure, anything that affects normal day to day operations.
 - The weblink to the disruption of service tool is [here](#).

3745-85-01

CONTINGENCY PLANS

- All community and nontransient noncommunity Drinking Water Systems are required to have an annually updated Contingency Plan. It is also recommended that all Wastewater Systems have a Contingency Plan that is kept up-to-date.
- Contingency Plans require PWS's to have a strategy for specific circumstances which could affect the quantity or quality of water they serve. There are 12 prescribed circumstances that must be addressed. If your system faces additional hazards others may not, you should add those to your Contingency Plan as well.
- The plans must include at least 3 alternate sources for the provision of water during an emergency.
- At least one or more circumstances covered in the Contingency Plan must be exercised **annually** and all circumstances must be exercised at least once every 5 years.
- Systems must exercise their ability to run on backup power and manually on a monthly basis
- An example Contingency Plan Template can be found [here](#).

CYBERSECURITY

- Ohio utilities (water, wastewater, electric, oil and gas, e.g.) continue to face unprecedented threats in the cybersecurity landscape. A threat can be as simple as the hacking of a utility's employee email account, or more seriously, a breach of plant controls. Other times, a simple email can be opened that contains harmful ransomware or malware that threaten the digital infrastructure of that system.
- Criminal actors will likely continue to try to obtain a system's customer data, financial information, or hacking into a facility's SCADA software, which ultimately allows criminals to threaten public health and safety and the financial and operational needs of those systems.

CYBERSECURITY

- There are simple solutions any Wastewater or Drinking Water Plant can take that can help minimize or prevent these unwanted attacks.
 - Change Default Passwords Immediately
 - Keep all systems and software up-to-date with patches
 - Backup OT/IT systems
 - Segregate networks
 - Conduct regular cybersecurity assessments

CYBERSECURITY RESOURCES

- Below is a list of resources for more information on cybersecurity.

- Ohio EPA

[Emergency Preparedness and Security](#)

- U.S. EPA websites

<https://www.epa.gov/emergency-response-research/water-infrastructure-resilience>

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-06/documents/cybersecurity_guide_for_states_final_0.pdf

<https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience>

<https://www.epa.gov/waterriskassessment/epa-cybersecurity-best-practices-water-sector>

<https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/forms/epas-water-sector-cybersecurity-evaluation-program>

- AWWA

[Cybersecurity & Guidance | American Water Works Association \(awwa.org\)](#)

<https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/Risk-Resilience>

- Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center

[WaterISAC](#)

[Free Cyber Vulnerability Scanning](#)

Section 2

REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATORS OF RECORD



ELECTRONIC DISCHARGE MONITORING REPORT (EDMR)

- eDMR reports must be submitted according to your NPDES permit.
- eDMR's can be submitted by a delegated official.
- eDMR's are due by **20th of each month**.
- To delegate an official, you must add the facility to your eBusiness Center account and a delegation of authority document will appear.
 - Print the delegation of authority document off, sign it in the presence of a notary, and physically mail the paperwork in.

ELECTRONIC DRINKING WATER REPORT (EDWR)

- eDWR reports must be submitted according to their PWS ID number.
- eDWR can be submitted by a delegated official.
- eDWR due by **10th of each month.**
- To delegate an official, you must add the facility to your eBusiness Center account and a delegation of authority document will appear.
 - Print the delegation of authority document off, sign it in the presence of a notary, and physically mail the paperwork in.

OPERATOR OF RECORD (ORC) NOTIFICATION FORM

- Notifying Ohio EPA of changes in ORC is the responsibility of the owner AND operator.
- You must submit a new ORC form within 3 days becoming the ORC or leaving the position of ORC.
- The ORC form can be found [here](#).
- This form is the same for water and wastewater.

OHID PORTAL

- All owners and operators who use the eBusiness center must have a valid OHID account.
- Instructions to create an account are located [here](#)
- If you are an existing eBusiness account holder, you must use the same email address that eBusiness has on file.
- If you wish to change your email address, you can change it in the account settings portion of your OHID account.

MINIMUM STAFFING REPORTING TOOL

- Operators of record at classified PWS's and NPDES facilities must submit their staffing times in eBusiness utilizing the minimum staffing reporting tool.
- Staffing times are due as follows:
 - **Drinking Water** the 10th of the month following the reporting period
 - **Wastewater** the 20th of the month following the reporting period
- Instructions to add or remove yourself as a backup operator, or ORC, or submit time, can be found [here](#).

Section 3


EBUSINESS REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFIED OPERATORS

OHID ACCOUNT


- You are required to keep your contact information up to date. You can do so in the OHID portal. You must have the Water/Wastewater Operator service activated to do so. If you do not, please follow the instructions [here](#).
- In the operator service, use the green **EDIT** button on the right hand side.

Certified Operator Service

Certified Operator Service Management

 This screen can be used to edit your contact information, apply for new exams or certifications, renewal certificates and apply contact hours to your certificate.

Kevin Jarrell
Ohio EPA
Columbus OH, 43215

 **Edit**

CONTACT INFORMATION

- **IMPORTANT:** Please ensure you have an updated email address associated with your OHID account. Ohio EPA will use emails to communicate with you.
- If you wish to change your email address, you can change it in the account settings portion of your OHID account.

RENEWAL GUIDELINES

- Renewal applications become available to an operator on August 1st of their renewal year.
- Renewals are required to be submitted through the eBusiness Center.
- A majority of your contact hours will be loaded to your eBusiness Center account by training providers who have uploaded the attendance. You must go through the renewal, select the number of contact hours to apply to your certificate, submit the renewal application and pay the appropriate fee.
- If **contact hours you earned do not appear** in your transcript, contact your training provider first to see if they are going to upload your attendance. In the rare occasion they are not going to, you can add courses to your renewal transcript.
- If you are having issues uploading the hours yourself, please contact the operator certification unit at 1(866)411-6728 or at opcert@epa.ohio.gov.

RENEWAL GUIDELINES

- The eBusiness Center does not replace your record keeping. You are expected to maintain your own records and training providers are still expected to provide you with documentation when completing a course.
- Instructions for utilizing the eBusiness Center and submitting a renewal application can be found [here](#).

Section 4

EXAM AND CERTIFICATION APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

OHIO EPA APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- Exam and Certification Applications must go through the eBusiness Center at <https://ohid.ohio.gov/>
- Do NOT submit an application after passing a **third-party exam** until you have met the operating experience requirements.

OHIO EPA APPLICATION GUIDELINES







- If you have submitted an application through eBusiness before and are submitting a new application, be sure to update the application prior to submitting.
- After you submit an application for examination, certification, or reciprocity, a copy of the application will appear. You should print the application and both you and your supervisor should sign and date the form. You can scan and submit the form to opcert@epa.ohio.gov.

APPLICABLE DUTIES

- Please note, the following experience is **not** accepted as operating experience and should be removed from the percentage of time that you designate to water and/or wastewater:
 - Meter reading only.
 - Customer shut off / turn on that is NOT related to the maintenance of a distribution system.
 - Work conducted on storm sewers that are not part of a combined sewer.
 - Service laterals from a residential house or other private property.
 - Residential septic systems with passive treatment .
 - If you work at multiple facilities, collection systems, or public water systems, the time spent driving to a different area should be excluded. You will be asked for an estimation of your drive time or documentation of your time spent at public water systems.

EXPERIENCE DOCUMENTATION GUIDANCE

- Be sure to enter the total number of months in each position. Do not calculate the months based upon the percentage designated as water and wastewater. The Operator Certification Unit will calculate your experience upon review.
- For **all part time, seasonal, or temporary positions** you must document the number of hours worked. If this work is not your current employer and you have not submitted signed documentation for this time in the past, please submit signed documentation confirming the hours worked when you apply.
- When you eliminate a percentage of time for inapplicable duties, please indicate you have done so in the duties section of the application.

Employer	Mailing Address	Start Date	End Date	Job Title	Percent DW	Percent WW	Action
Ohio EPA	50 West Town Street Columbus OH 43215	01/01/2001	01/01/2009	Environmental Specialist 2	75.0	0.0	 
Ohio EPA	50 West Town Street Columbus OH 43215	01/05/2009	05/10/2014	Environmental Supervisor	50.0	0.0	 
Ohio EPA	50 West Town Street Columbus OH 43215	05/14/2014		Environmental Manager	80.0	0.0	 

- Each entry must be filled out completely. Duties must be described in **DETAIL**.

OVERTIME DOCUMENTATION

- If you have overtime hours, you can claim them on your application. Please be sure to indicate the time as part time and use the number of hours for experience time.
- If you are **currently employed** by the same organization where you earned overtime hours, then no additional documentation is required.
- If this is a **past position**, you will need to acquire a signed letter from your previous employer verifying the overtime hours earned.

* Employer Name:	Ohio EPA
* Mailing Address:	50 West Town Street
* Mailing City:	Columbus
* Mailing State:	OH
* Mailing Zip:	43215
* Address Country:	USA
* Start Date:	1/5/2009
End Date (if still employed leave blank):	5/10/2014
* Job Title:	Environmental Supervisor
* Experience Time Type:	Part Time

* Experience time (Full-time enter number of months or part-time enter number of hours):
483

* Document the percentage of your months/hours you spend on Water related duties:
50

* Document the percentage of your months/hours you spend on Wastewater related duties:
0.0

* PWSID:
OH1234567

* Describe your operating duties in **DETAIL** (2000 characters max):
I worked 483 overtime hours as an Environmental Supervisor from January 5, 2009 to May 10, 2014.



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Congratulations, you
have completed this
training!