



# Saskatchewan's Mandatory Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Program

The mandatory certification program and the Operator Certification Board (OCB) were created on July 14, 2000 through amendment of regulations under Saskatchewan Environment's (SE) *Environmental Management and Protection Act*. The mandatory program replaced the previous voluntary program that had operated in Saskatchewan since 1977. At the same time, a document detailing the water and wastewater works operator certification standards was prepared. Information and certification criteria in this document are taken from the aforementioned legislation. To receive a copy of the Standards, please contact SE at 306-787-6504 or they can be found on <http://www.saskh20.ca/foroperators.asp>

## Requirements for Operators Who Want to Apply for Certification

The requirements consist of a combination of education and experience based upon the type and level of certification desired. Information regarding your facility's classification is available from SE. All operators are required to pass a standardized Board exam prior to being eligible for certification.

## Operator Classification System

The municipal water/wastewater utility operator certification program includes the following four categories:

Water Treatment (WT)    Water Distribution (WD)    Wastewater Treatment (WWT)    Wastewater Collection (WWC)

Each category is divided into four classes, from Class-1 (a small, uncomplicated system) to a Class-4 (a large and complicated system). In addition, a small system classification has been introduced for communities with a population less than 500. SE establishes the classification of a facility.

## Who Are Water & Wastewater Utility Operators

An **operator** is a person who daily is performing tasks that have a direct impact on the quality and quantity of treated drinking water or wastewater that is being produced in a municipal, private or provincial government facility. This also includes a person working in an industrial setting (ie. power plant, mine-site, oil refinery, etc) who is treating drinking water and domestic wastewater for an office complex, dining facilities, on-site living quarters, etc. Treating process/boiler water/wastewater is not included in our designation of **operator**. An operator working in **DRC** (Direct Responsible Charge) would be designated as such by the owner of that utility.

## Specific Requirements for Operators Seeking Certification

**The certification program is a stepped program starting with Class 1 and upward. All operators must start at Class 1 and move toward their desired certification level as the exams are progressive from one level to the next. Operators may apply for certification in only the categories (WT, WD, WWT, WWC) where they have facility work experience.**

**Existing Operators:** Existing operators who are not yet certified have to meet the education, experience and examination criteria for their desired category(s) and level(s) as set forth in the Standards (see next page for a brief breakdown of education and experience requirements). NOTE: Existing operators must pass all levels of exams up to their desired level. Existing operators are allowed to substitute facility work experience for missing high school education.

**New Entry Operators:** New entry operators have to meet education, experience and examination criteria as set forth in the Standards (see next page). These operators should have a minimum of Grade 12 or GED-12 plus one year of facility work experience for a Class 1 certificate in any/all the four categories of WT, WD, WWT or WWC in which the operator is working.

## Requirements for Operators Seeking Certification for Small Water and Wastewater Systems

A small water or wastewater system is defined as one where the population is less than 500 and the water treatment plant (treating ground water only) and/or the distribution system is classified as Class-1. The wastewater treatment facility would be a facultative lagoon system and a collection system including lift station would be Class-1. Operators of these systems may become certified as Small Water System Operator and/or Small Wastewater System Operator.

**Existing Operators:** Existing operators who are not yet certified have to meet the education, experience and examination criteria as set forth in the Standards. The education and experience criteria is Grade 10 or GED-10 plus 6 months of facility work experience for a Small System Certificate, and must pass a small water system and/or a small wastewater system certification examination. Existing operators are allowed to substitute facility work experience for missing education up to the Grade 10 level.

**New Entry Operators:** New entry operators have to meet education, experience and examination criteria as set forth in the Standards. These operators should have a minimum of Grade 10 or GED-10 plus 6 months of facility work experience and must pass a small water system and/or a small wastewater system examination.

## Education & Experience Criteria

	Class			
	1	2	3	4
	Ed/Exp	Ed/Exp	Ed/Exp	Ed/Ex
<b>WT</b> <sup>1</sup>	12/ 1	12/ 3	14 <sup>2</sup> / 4 <sup>4</sup>	16 <sup>3</sup> /4 <sup>4</sup>
<b>WD</b> <sup>1</sup>	12/ 1	12/ 3	14 <sup>2</sup> / 4	16 <sup>3</sup> /4
<b>WWT</b> <sup>1</sup>	12/ 1	12/ 3	14 <sup>2</sup> / 4 <sup>4</sup>	16 <sup>3</sup> /4 <sup>4</sup>
<b>WWC</b> <sup>1</sup>	12/ 1	12/ 3	14 <sup>2</sup> / 4	16 <sup>3</sup> /4

1. Each category of certification requires an operator to pass all of the certification examinations up to and including their desired level.
2. Education of 14 years means Grade 12 or GED 12 and two additional years of education. See Standards and Program Guide for details.
3. Education of 16 years means Grade 12 and four additional years of education. See Standards and Program Guide for details.
4. In these cases when an operator is required to have four years of operational experience, two of those years must be in a **Direct Responsible Charge (DRC)** position.

### Notes:

#### Continuing Education Units (CEUs)

CEUs offer an avenue for operators to improve academic standing and assist in meeting educational requirements for certification. CEUs are earned by operators attending workshops, conferences, instructing at workshops or successfully completing correspondence courses. One CEU (1.0 CEU) is earned upon participating in 10 hours of relevant instruction in an approved course or workshop. Any training that is not directly accessible to anyone from the general operator population does not count; neither does any lecture time at a workshop or course that does not relate to operational or related skills (ie. business or annual meeting, breaks, lunch, travel time, etc.). As of July 15, 2003 operators must earn 0.5 CEU to renew their operator certificate.

Operators must maintain records of their own CEUs by keeping **CEU Notices** or **Letters of Attendance** issued by the training agency for certification application purposes.

#### Certification Examinations

Class-1 to Class-4 certification exams are available in Saskatchewan for the categories of water treatment, water distribution, wastewater collection and wastewater treatment. They are standardized exams especially prepared for Canadian operators with 100 multiple choice questions per examination to test an operator's knowledge of treatment processes, basic science (chemistry, biology, electricity, physics), mathematics, support systems (valves, feed pumps, piping, motors) safety and supervision.

Operators who qualify for small system certification will have to write and pass a Small Water System and a Small Wastewater System certification exam that consists of 50 multiple choice questions each. All exam dates and locations are listed on the SIAST website [www.siastr.ca/operatorsexamsittings/](http://www.siastr.ca/operatorsexamsittings/) or [www.saskh20.ca/foroperators.asp](http://www.saskh20.ca/foroperators.asp) on the SaskH20 website. Alternately, call Tracey at 306-694-3282 or contact your local community college.

#### For certification information, including application forms, please contact:

Operator Certification Board  
 Mailroom, 3211 Albert Street.  
 Regina, Saskatchewan S4R 5W6  
 Tel: 306-789-3430 Fax: 306-789-3429  
 Email: [Carla.weber@sasktel.net](mailto:Carla.weber@sasktel.net)

#### For information regarding the Standards, please contact:

Gus Feitzelmayer  
 Saskatchewan Environment  
 Drinking Water Quality Section  
 3211 Albert Street  
 Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 5W6  
 Tel: 306-787-6174 Fax: 306-787-0197  
 Email: [gfeitzelmayer@serm.gov.sk.ca](mailto:gfeitzelmayer@serm.gov.sk.ca)

#### For information regarding SWWA membership. Please contact:

Monique Will  
 46 Windfield Road  
 Regina, Saskatchewan S4V 0E7  
 Tel: 306-761-1278 Fax: 306-761-1279  
 Website: <http://www.swwa.sk.ca>  
 Email: [swwa.office@sasktel.net](mailto:swwa.office@sasktel.net)