

## Procedures and Criteria for Training and Certification Renewal

### Illinois EPA Drinking Water Operator Certification Program Procedures and Criteria for Training and Certification Renewal

#### Renewal Training Requirement

Drinking water operator certificates are issued with the expiration date being three years from July 1 of the calendar year in which the certificate was issued. Certified drinking water operators are required to obtain a specified amount of training in order to qualify for certificate renewal. **Class A and B operators are required to obtain 30 hours of training and Class C and D operators are required to obtain 15 hours of training during the certificate period before the certificate expiration date.**

#### Training Criteria

Specific training sessions, courses, meetings, etc. must meet all of the following criteria to be accepted for certificate renewal:

1. The training must directly relate to water distribution, water treatment, or the professional responsibilities of the operator. Allowable training topics include but are not limited to:

Coagulation and Flocculation	Reservoir Management and Intake
Corrosion Control	Structures
Demineralization	Reverse Osmosis
Disinfection	Safety
Distribution System Facilities	Sampling and Operating Reports
Distribution System Operation and Maintenance	Sedimentation
Drinking Water Permits, Laws, Rules, and Regulations	Surface Water Treatment
Drinking Water Related Computer Training	Surface Water Protection
Electrical Maintenance	Taste and Odor Control
Emergency Planning and Preparation	Trihalomethanes
Filtration	Utility Administration Management
Fluoridation	Water Quality
Ground Water Protection	Water Softening
Ground Water Treatment	Water Sources and Treatment
Instrumentation	Water Storage Facilities
Iron and Manganese Control	Water Supply Math and Chemistry
Laboratory Procedures	Water Supply Operation and Maintenance
Membrane Technology	Wells
Process Waste Handling and Disposal	
Pumps and Hydraulics	

2. Training may be provided by any of the variety of organizations equipped to provide such training, such as colleges and universities, technical institutes, educational units of governmental or industrial agencies, professional operator organizations, and equipment suppliers and manufacturers. Training which meets the criteria, regardless of the location of the training or training provider, is allowed for renewal training credit. For example, drinking water related training from another state will be allowed for credit provided the criteria is met. In-house training programs provided at drinking water supplies are also allowed for training credit provided all training criteria are met and proof of training documentation is provided to the trainees.
3. Acceptable training formats include classroom courses, tele-conferences, courses offered via the Internet, workshops, seminars, correspondence courses, in-house training programs, and drinking water related training sessions at conferences/meetings of professional operator organizations. Training credit is also allowed for teachers or presenters of training for the first time a course is taught or a drinking water related presentation is made.
4. Training providers, or training sponsors, must provide proof-of-training documentation to trainees in order for the training to be accepted for certificate renewal. Training providers or training sponsors may request pre-approval of training by submitting a Training Provider Application for Course/Training Event Approval Form to the Agency. Listings of courses and other training activities which have been approved for renewal training credit will be made available to the operators.

### **Proof-of-Training Records, Record Keeping, Audits**

Certified water supply operators are required to maintain their own proof of training records for a period of four years. The Agency may audit proof of training records by random selection or in cases where additional information is required. However, for most renewals, completed Operator Training Submission and Renewal Application Forms will provide sufficient training documentation and the submission of actual records will be unnecessary. Failure to provide proof of training documentation when specifically requested by the Agency may result in denial of certificate renewal, denial of certificate restoration, or certificate revocation.

Proof of training records must include:

1. Records showing the name of course or training activity, name of training provider, name of instructor or speaker, location of training, date(s) of training, and total training hours completed (specified actual hours, \*CEUs, or \*\*Quarter Hours/Semester hours);
2. Program/course outline, conference/meeting agenda, or narrative summary of training;
3. Attendance verification records such as completion certificates, diplomas, grade slips, registration payment receipts, or other documents to verify attendance for training where

official documents are provided or name, address, and telephone number of training provider where official documents are not provided.

\*Note - The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is a nationally recognized unit defined as 10 training contact hours. One training contact hour is a 60 minute classroom session of instruction or its equivalent (0.1 CEU). One contact hour or 0.1 CEU will count as one hour towards meeting the certificate renewal training requirement. Training in which CEUs are not assigned will be credited based on actual hours spent in training.

\*\*Note - Quarter hours or semester hours are usually assigned for courses offered by colleges and universities. For the purpose of calculating actual classroom hours for renewal training credit, the following conversions should be used:

1 Semester Hour = 15 hours of training credit

1 Quarter Hour = 10 hours of training credit

### **Training Exclusions**

Types of training activities which will be excluded from renewal training credit are those in which it is not self evident that the activity relates directly to water distribution, water treatment, or the professional responsibilities of the operator. The following are not considered training for the purpose of meeting the certificate renewal training requirements:

Entertainment or recreational activities;

On-the-job work or apprenticeships;

Personal self-improvement courses;

Plant tours (unless drinking water related training is integrated into the tour);

Portions of meetings and conferences when drinking water related training is not provided (i.e. business session, lunch, breaks, etc.);

Time spent viewing conference/meeting exhibits; and

Travel time to and from training activities.

Example of typical calculation of training hours:

### **Example Training Agenda**

8:00 a.m.	Registration	(Exclude)
9:00 a.m.	Training Session #1 (with 15 min. break)	(2 hrs. 45 min.)
12:00 p.m.	Lunch	(Exclude)
1:00 p.m.	Training Session #2	(2 hrs.)
3:00 p.m.	Break	(Exclude)
3:15 p.m.	Training Session #3	(1 hr.)
4:15 p.m.	Business Session	(Exclude)
5:00 p.m.	Adjourn	

Total training: 5 hours 45 minutes

### **Meetings and Conferences of Professional Operator Organizations**

Operators may receive training credit for certificate renewal by attending training sessions presented at meetings and conferences of professional operator organizations. In order to receive training credit, each training session attended during a meeting or conference must be identified and included on an Operator Training Submission Form provided by the Agency.

### **Submission of Training Hours**

Operators may submit completed training for renewal credit to the Agency using Operator Training Submission Forms provided by the Agency. Submission of the training hours to the Agency can occur at any time or frequency, as determined by the operator, provided the renewal deadline is met. Upon receipt and review of a completed Operator Training Submission Form, the Agency will prepare, and provide to the operator, a Training Summary Report indicating the newly adjusted number of training hours on file for the operator. The operator is responsible for documenting accumulated training hours on the Operator Training Submission Forms by providing the same documentation as described below for certificate renewal.

### **Annual Training Summary Reports**

At the beginning of each calendar year, the Agency will mail a Training Summary Report of completed training to each certified operator. The annual Training Summary Reports will indicate the completed training activities the Agency has on file for each certified operator and the number of training hours accrued. In addition, the Training Summary Reports will specify the operator's certificate expiration date and the training requirements for certificate renewal. Training Summary Reports will also be provided at any other time of the year upon request.

### **Certificate Renewal**

By May 31 of the year a certificate is due to expire, the Illinois EPA will mail a Renewal Application Form to the operator at the most recent address the Agency has on file for the operator. The Renewal Application Form will specify the certificate expiration date, fees due, training requirements for certificate renewal, and an itemization of the completed training on file with the Agency. The operator is responsible for itemizing any additional accumulated training hours (completed training not previously submitted to the Agency) on the renewal application by documenting the following information for each completed training activity:

- Training provider name;
- Name of course or training event;
- Training description or course content summary;
- Drinking water related competencies developed or maintained;
- Location of training;
- Date(s) of training (beginning and ending); and

Training hours completed.

After completing the required information, the operator is responsible for signing the Renewal Application Form and returning it along with the appropriate fees to the Agency on or before June 30. A grace period for submitting the completed Renewal Application Form will be granted until August 1 before the restoration fee is assessed.

The completed Renewal Application Form will contain a certification statement to be signed by the operator to certify that all information provided in the Renewal Application Form is true and complete. The Agency will not process Renewal Application Forms which are not signed by the operators seeking renewal. Falsification of a Renewal Application Form will result in denial of certificate renewal and/or certificate revocation.

### **Certificate Restoration**

An operator whose certificate has been expired for less than two years and who has completed the required training during the certificate's effective period, may have the certificate restored by paying the required restoration and renewal fee(s) and providing proof the required training was completed during the three year certificate period before the certificate expiration date. Operators who fail to complete the training as required or allow their certificates to be expired two or more years, must reapply and pass the certification examination in order to again be certified.

### **Waiver of Required Training**

In an extreme hardship case, and upon recommendation of the Drinking Water Operator Certification Advisory Board (Advisory Board), the Agency may grant a waiver from the renewal training requirement when it is demonstrated and documented that it was impossible for an operator to obtain the required training. Examples of extreme hardship may include serious medical conditions or extended military service. As is the case for certificate restoration, individuals applying for a training waiver must provide the Agency with a written request for an Advisory Board review within two years after the certificate expiration date.

### **Contested Agency Determinations**

Operators, training providers, and training sponsors may contest Agency determinations regarding denial of certificate renewal or restoration, denial of training credit, and determinations regarding the amount of training credit to be awarded for a specific training event. Contested Agency determinations will be forwarded to the Advisory Board for recommendation. Individuals contesting an Agency determination must provide the Agency with a written request for an Advisory Board review within 30 days after the Agency determination. The written request shall state the name and address of the individual, the Agency determination being contested, and all information to support the individual's position.