



Protecting Public Health Requirements for Waterworks Operators

The Office of Drinking Water's Waterworks Operator Certification rule ([chapter 246-292 WAC](#)) requires most Group A public water systems to have certified operators.

The Department of Health requires a certified operator be in responsible charge of the daily operational and maintenance activities for the following types of public water systems:

- ◆ Community
- ◆ Nontransient noncommunity (NTNC)
- ◆ Transient noncommunity (TNC) systems, if required

Certification Options

To comply with the rule you may:

- ◆ Hire a properly certified operator.
- ◆ Hire a contract operator.
- ◆ Contract with an approved satellite management agency (SMA).
- ◆ Apply for a temporary certification.



Operator Certification and Renewal

Application and Examination

To become certified, applicants must meet minimum education and experience requirements (see [WAC 246-292-060](#)), obtain department approval, and pass an exam. You can find the waterworks exam packet on the [Waterworks Operator Certification](#) website or request a printed copy (see contact information on page 4).

Renewal

Every November, eligible certified operators receive an annual renewal notice. Operators must review their information, make any necessary corrections on the form, and return the renewal form and fee postmarked by the renewal deadline date. Operators failing to renew their certification will have their certification inactivated. Failure to renew is not appealable. To achieve certification they must apply as a new operator.



Professional Growth Requirements for Certified Operators

All certified operators must demonstrate professional growth acceptable to us within their designated professional-growth reporting period. Operators who fail to meet the professional growth requirement will have their certification inactivated. Failure to meet the professional growth requirement is not appealable. To achieve certification they must apply as a new operator.

To meet the professional growth requirement, each certified operator must accomplish one of the following:

- ◆ Accumulate a minimum of three continuing education units (CEUs) or college credits for training that has an influence on water quality, water supply, or public health protection and the training needs to be:
 - Directly relevant to the operation or maintenance of a water system;
 - Directly relevant to managing the operation, or maintenance activities of a water system.
- ◆ Advance by examination in the Waterworks Operator Certification Program to a level 2, 3, or 4, or achieve additional certification by examination as defined in the Waterworks Operator Certification rule (for example, a WDM obtains a CCS certification).

Certified Operator means a person holding a valid certificate for one or more of the following classifications:

- ◆ Water distribution manager (WDM)
- ◆ Water distribution specialist (WDS)
- ◆ Water treatment plant operator (WTPO)
- ◆ Cross-connection control specialist (CCS)



Certified Operator Responsibilities

A certified operator in responsible charge of a water system must:

- ◆ Perform or manage the public water system's daily operational and maintenance activities according to acceptable public health practices and water industry standards.
- ◆ Be on-site or available 24 hours per day to begin appropriate action within 2 hours.
- ◆ Conduct water quality monitoring, maintain adequate records, and take follow-up action, if needed, to comply with state and federal drinking water requirements.
- ◆ Implement preventative maintenance programs, inspect treatment and other public system components for malfunctions, maintain adequate records, and make needed repairs.
- ◆ Analyze, review, and maintain records of instrument readings and laboratory tests, determine the location and causes of any malfunctions, and adjust various treatment processes or other components.

- ◆ Implement a cross-connection control program, if directed by the water system.
- ◆ Determine and implement remedial actions in an emergency and, if applicable, follow department directives.
- ◆ Cooperate during a special purpose investigation or sanitary survey.
- ◆ Provide records and reports to us, or our representative, upon request.
- ◆ Provide written notification when an operator begins working for or leaves a public water system.

Contract Operator means a certified operator is approved to operate three or more Group A public water systems.

Minimum Certification Requirements

Contract operators who are responsible for three or more water systems must be certified as a water distribution manager 1 or higher (certification level is based on the size of the largest water system) and as a cross-connection control specialist. Other types of certification may be required, depending on individual system requirements.

Written Agreement

Contract operators must submit a copy of each signed public water system operations contract to our Waterworks Operator Certification Program within 30 days of the effective date. The contract must include:

- ◆ Operator's name and certification number.
- ◆ List of duties the contract operator must perform (see certified operator responsibilities on page 2).
- ◆ Duration of contract terms.
- ◆ Signature of water system representative.
- ◆ Signature of contract operator.
- ◆ Date agreement is signed.



Contract Operators List

All department-approved contract operators who asked to be listed on our website are found at [Contract Operator Public Listing](#). Contract operators who want to add their information to the listing can complete [DOH form 331-439](#) and mail it to the Waterworks Operator Certification Program (see page 4).

Satellite Management Agency

Satellite management agencies (SMAs) can provide skilled operational services to public water systems. Department-approved SMAs own or manage multiple water systems ([chapter 246-295 WAC](#)). SMAs operate on a regional or county-wide basis without being physically connected. For information about approved SMAs, contact your Office of Drinking Water [regional planner](#) or call 1-800-521-0323.

Temporary Operator Certification

We may issue a nonrenewable, nontransferable temporary certification to an operator to fill a vacant mandatory position, or a reclassified position if it meets Office of Drinking Water criteria. Only one temporary certification may be issued in each instance of any vacant position and it may be valid for up to 12 months. To request a temporary certification, the system must submit the following:

- ◆ A letter (or e-mail) requesting a temporary certification application for the designated vacant position.
- ◆ A completed temporary certification application signed by the operator and water system.
- ◆ An affidavit of employment and supporting information to document experience and demonstrate that the applicant will meet the requirements for operator certification by the end of the temporary period.
- ◆ The temporary certification application fee.

Publications

[Chapter 70.119 RCW](#)

[Public water supply systems – operators](#)

[Chapter 246-292 WAC](#)

[Waterworks operator certification rule](#)

[Chapter 246-290 WAC](#)

[Group A public water supplies](#)

[Waterworks Operator Certification website](#)

For More Information

Waterworks Operator Certification Program

P.O. Box 47822

Olympia, WA 98504-7822

1-800-525-2536

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/DrinkingWater.aspx>

Our publications are online at <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/eh/dw/publications/publications.cfm>



For people with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY call 711).



