Commonly Asked Questions about Operator Certification

Q. What is the timeframe for training during my renewal period?

A. Each Maine Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator certificate must be renewed every 2 years. March 1 is always the renewal deadline by which operators must pay their renewal fee and show proof they completed 18 clock hours of approved training during the previous two year certificate period. (Example: March 1, 2019 – February 28, 2021)

If your Operator number ends with an odd digit you are due to renew in odd numbered years (2021, 2023, 2025). If your Operator number ends with an even digit you are due to renew in even numbered years (2022, 2024, 2026). Classes taken in January and February of your renewal year always count toward the renewal period that precedes your March 1 renewal date.

Note: A certificate holder with a Grade 1 Spray Irrigation Treatment System Operator Certificate (SITS-1) is required to show proof of completion of at least 6 clock hours of training during his/her previous 2 year certificate period.

Q. What happens to my certification if I fail to pay my renewal fee or do not have the required training hours by March 1st of my renewal year?

A. Effective midnight on March 1st, your certification will become Inactive. Inactive operators cannot be the person who has direct responsibility for the operation of any wastewater treatment plant as stated in 32 MRSA §4171 (3) and cannot legally sign the Discharge Monitoring Report for any wastewater treatment facility. For your certification to be reactivated, you will be required to pay a $100 Reactivation Fee in addition to your renewal fee.

Q. If my certification is currently Inactive, what do I need to do to reactivate it?

A. If your certification is inactive for less than 6 months, your certification can be reactivated if you pay all appropriate fees and show proof of completion of 18 training contact hours.

If your certification has been Inactive for more than 6 months but less than 2 years, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection may require you to retake the Wastewater Operator Certification exam. An Inactive operator who wishes to reactive their certification after the 6-month grace period but before 2 years must pay the following required fees:

- Pay the renewal fee ($125)
- Pay the reactivation fee ($100)
- Pay fees associated with the exam
  - CBT Application Fee ($125)
  - CBT exam administrator fee ($102 per attempt)
  - Paper exam fee for Spray Irrigation Treatment exam ($125 per attempt)

If your certification has been Inactive for 2 years, you will be removed from the list of certified wastewater operators and you will be required to retake the Wastewater Operator Certification exam if you want to be certified again.
Q. What is the policy on safety or management training hours?

A. In order to maintain your certification, you must complete 18 hours of DEP approved training during your renewal period. Of the required 18 hours, a maximum of 6 safety and/or management hours is allowed towards your approved training. The combination of Safety and Management TCHs shall not exceed six hours for the 2-year biennial renewal cycle.

Acceptable management training topics include planning, organizing, staffing, communication, conducting meetings, and public relations. Human Resources (HR), workplace policy, and general office training are not accepted for Management TCHs.

Approved safety training must be directly related to the day-to-day operations of a wastewater treatment plant. Safety topics in 29 CFR 19210 General Industry Standards and 29 CFR 1926 Construction Industry Standards are acceptable.

Q. How can I ensure accuracy with my Wastewater Operator continuing education record in Maine?

A. The summary list you receive in October each year will only contain information that has been sent to the Maine Wastewater Operator Certification Program.

If you currently hold an active Maine Wastewater Operator Certificate, you may view a summary of the Training Contact Hours by visiting www.neiwppcc-jetcc.org/wastewater-operator-renewal. This report is updated on the first business day of the month.

Submitting proof of training with your operator number is the most efficient way for us to record the continuing education you have completed. While some training providers regularly send us summary lists or sign-in sheets from classes they have held, some do not. At any time, you may send us a copy of your certificate of completion to make sure it is recorded for you.

You should always keep the original training certificate you receive for your own records.

Q. How do I know if a class I attended is approved for continuing education as a Maine Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator?

A. Many of the Maine based training organizations such as NEIWPCC-JETCC, Maine Rural Water Association, Maine Water Environment Association, and Maine Water Utilities Association obtain pre-approval for applicable topics prior to publicizing their classes. If there is any question about a course’s applicability for Wastewater Operator Certification you should inquire with NEIWPCC-JETCC or Maine DEP.

Q. How do I obtain approval for a training class that I am interested in or have taken?

A. Maine DEP must approve all classes for continuing education for Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators. To obtain approval, you need to complete an Application for Training Contact Hours (TCHs) and submit it with a training brochure and instructor credentials directly to NEIWPCC-JETCC and we will submit it to Maine DEP for you. Download the application at www.jetcc.org.

Q. What if I move or change jobs?

A. You must notify the Maine Wastewater Operator Certification Program if your contact information (address, phone #, email, current employer) on record changes. Failure to notify the program could result in failure to receive important information regarding your Wastewater Operator’s Certificate. Change of Address or Status forms are available online at www.jetcc.org.