

Frequently Asked Questions

93rd Annual Water & Wastewater
Operator School
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Kansas Department of Health & Environment
Bureau of Water

Vickie Jo Wessel & Teresa Schuyler
Operator Certification Program- Topeka, KS

Who administers the Kansas water & wastewater certification program?

- The State of Kansas through the Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) administers a mandatory water and wastewater certification program
- The program was begun in 1975 as a result of laws passed by the Kansas Legislature.
- The law requires all water supply systems and wastewater treatment facilities to be under the supervision of a KDHE certified operator

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How are water supply systems classified in Kansas?

Class	Description	Population Served
Small System	1. Distribution System Only 2. Chlorination of Groundwater Only	All <501
I	1. Chlorination of Groundwater Only 2. Treatment of Groundwater *	501 – 1,500 <501
II	1. Chlorination of Groundwater Only 2. Treatment of Groundwater * 3. Treatment of Surface Water	1,501 – 5,000 501 – 2,500 <2,501
III	1. Chlorination of Groundwater Only 2. Treatment of Groundwater or Surface Water	5,001 – 20,000 2,501 – 10,000
IV	1. Chlorination of Groundwater Only 2. Treatment of Groundwater or Surface Water	>20,000 >10,000

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What is treatment of groundwater?

* Includes iron and manganese removal, softening, membrane filtration, coagulation, sedimentation, filtration, re-carbonation and chemical addition (*other than chlorine*).

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How are wastewater treatment facilities classified in Kansas?

Class	Description	Population Served
Small System	1. Nonoverflowing Wastewater Ponds	All
I	1. Any Secondary Facility ** 2. Overflowing Wastewater Ponds	<1,001 All
II	1. Any Secondary Facility **	1,001-5,000
III	1. Any Secondary Facility ** 2. Advanced or Specialized Facility ***	5,001-25,000 <=5,000
IV	1. Any Secondary Facility** 2. Advanced or Specialized Facility ***	>25,000 >5,000

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What is Treatment of Wastewater?

- ** Biological treatment facility including: waste stabilization ponds, trickling filters, rotating biological contactors and activated sludge
- *** Includes chemical, biological or physical treatment to provide nutrient removal beyond secondary treatment; or effluent clarification

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How do I become a Kansas certified water or wastewater operator?

Each operator must meet the following requirements:

- Currently own or be employed by a water supply system or wastewater treatment facility.
- Have a high school diploma or GED.
- Have acquired the minimum number of years of experience for the class of examination desired.
- Have acquired the minimum number of *points* for the class of examination desired. Points are awarded based on experience, education, and training.

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Points and Experience Required

CLASS	POINTS	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
Small System	12.5	6 months
Class I	13.0	1 - year
Class II	14.0	1 - year
Class III	16.0	2 - years
Class IV	18.0	2 - years

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Training/Education Experience	Credit Hours	Experience Points Earned
1-day training **	5	0.0
2-day training **	10	.25
KDHE Annual School		
• 2-days	10	.25
• 3-days	15	.50
High School diploma/GED	NA	12
College – each full year 30 credit hours	NA	1.00
Operating experience – each full year – 40 hours a week	NA	1.00
Cal State correspondence course – per volume	NA	1.00

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Training/Education Experience	Credit Hours	Experience Points Earned
Approved semester-long Courses	54	1.50
Approved 2-year environmental technology degree	NA	6.00

**Training must be pre-approved by KDHE
Renewal hours do not carry forward to subsequent renewal periods

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Is training required prior to taking a certification exam?

- Training is a vital part of the Kansas certification program. Training is not only helpful in obtaining initial certification; it is mandatory for renewal of a certificate. Failure to attain the required continuing education will result in non-renewal of an operator's certificate.
- While training is not required prior to taking the operator certification exam, KDHE believes that training is extremely helpful in obtaining initial certification.

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Where can I find study material to study for certification exams?

- KDHE recommends the water and wastewater training manuals published by the University of California – Sacramento. The Web site for these manuals is www.owp.csus.edu
- KDHE also has Kansas Small System Water and Wastewater manuals. To request a copy please contact our office.

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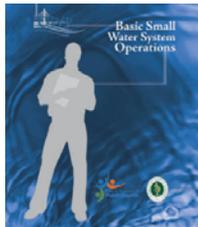


RECOMMENDED STUDY MATERIAL – MANUALS FROM CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO www.owp.csus.edu

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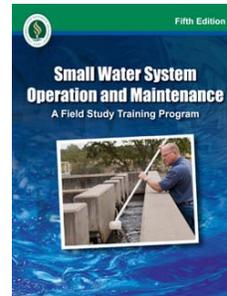
RECOMMENDED FOR SMALL SYSTEM WATER



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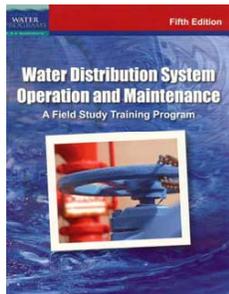
RECOMMENDED FOR SMALL SYSTEM & CLASS I WATER



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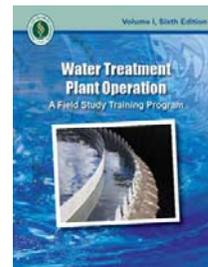
RECOMMENDED FOR SMALL SYSTEM, CLASS I, II, III & IV WATER



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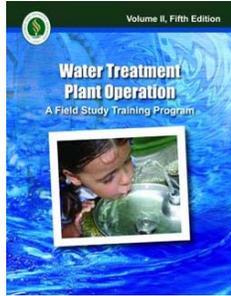
RECOMMENDED FOR CLASS II, III & IV WATER



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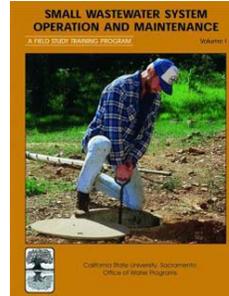
RECOMMENDED FOR CLASS II, III & IV WATER



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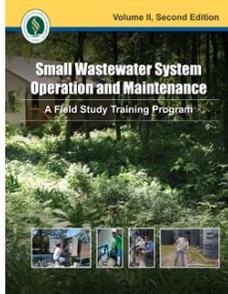
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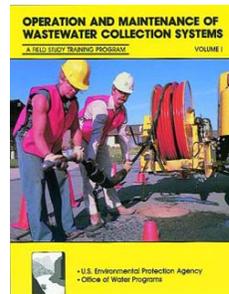
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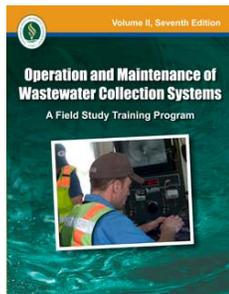
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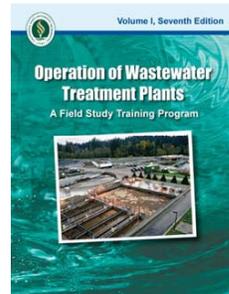
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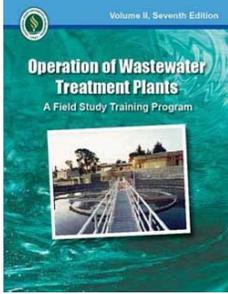
RECOMMENDED FOR CLASS I, II, III & IV WASTEWATER



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**RECOMMENDED FOR CLASS II, III & IV
WASTEWATER**



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**How can I obtain an Application for
Water\Wastewater Certification Exam?**

- You can obtain an application from the KDHE Operator Certification Web site www.kdheks.gov/water/www.html or by contacting our office.
- If it is the first time you have applied to take the exam you must submit a copy of your high school diploma or GED with the application.

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Exam Applications

- Please take the time to carefully fill out each part of the application in detail
- Provide a clear and detailed work history
- The application must be signed by you and your immediate supervisor
- Keep a copy of the application for your file
- Plan ahead and mail your application early
- \$25 fee must accompany the application

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**Why does the exam application have to
be mailed to KDHE two weeks before
the exam date?**

- We have to screen all applications to ensure the applicants meet the minimum qualifications for the examination. With as many as 200 exams given at one test site, evaluating, approving and preparing exam packets for a large number of applicants is time and labor intensive.
- Allow time for approval letters to be mailed back
- Additionally, all exams must be paid for before exam results will be mailed.

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**Why would my exam application be
returned in the mail unprocessed?**

- The application was incomplete
- The application did not have the required signatures
- The application was not received in our office by the application deadline
- To assure that your application is completed in detail and mailed on time it is recommended that you do it yourself

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- Training is a vital part of the Kansas certification program. Training is not only helpful in obtaining initial certification; it is mandatory for renewal of a certificate. Failure to attain the required continuing education will result in non-renewal of an operator's certificate.

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How many hours of continuing Education is required after certification

- Small System operators are required to obtain a minimum of 5 hours of approved training every 2 years.
- Class I, II, III and IV are required to obtain a minimum of 10 hours of approved training every 2 years.
- The renewal cycle is two years from the date of certification.
- Training credit shall be valid only for the renewal period in which it was earned and will not carry over into any subsequent renewal period.

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What is approved training?

- Only training approved by KDHE will be credited towards meeting the renewal requirements. The training must be related to the subject matter of the certificate to which the credit is being applied.
- If you are not sure if training you are wanting to attend has been approved for renewal credit please contact the training provider and ask if it has been approved by KDHE for water and wastewater renewal credit prior to attending.

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Where can I find a list of approved training?

- Training listed on KDHE training calendar has been approved by KDHE. For other training not listed on the training calendar, verify with the training provider that the training has been approved by KDHE.
- Please remember that KDHE has no control over scheduling changes made by the training providers. For the most up-to-date training schedule check the on-line training calendar and always contact the training provider to get registered.

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What will happen if I do not obtain my continuing education or fail to renew my certificate by the expiration date?

- Considered no longer certified
- Removed from the certified operator database
- You will have to pay a reinstatement fee along with the renewal fee after you obtain the required continuing education

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Can an expired certificate be reinstated?

- Yes an expired certificate can be reinstated for up to two years from the expiration date by obtaining the required continuing education hours, paying the renewal fee and paying a reinstatement fee.
 - Reinstatement fee up to one year is \$35.00
 - Reinstatement fee up to two years is \$45.00
 - After two years you will have to retake and pass the operator certification exam

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Can an operator check their own renewal and training information?

- KDHE has established real-time Internet access to operator data. To access the operator database, go to www.kdheks.gov/water/www.html and click on Certified Operator Database. Once you have gained access to the operator database, you will be able to review operator renewal dates and continuing education hours. Operators can also e-mail KDHE changes of address, employment, etc. directly from the site.

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What training records should I keep?

- Although KDHE maintains individual operator training records from cooperating training providers, it is the operator's responsibility for maintaining their own training records. Documentation of attendance or a certificate of completion for each training event should be provided by the training provider and maintained by the operator.
- The operator's documentation will be used to resolve errors in KDHE's records or those of the training provider and/or course sponsor.

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What is an operator in training?(OIT)

- OIT is a temporary certification that can be issued to the operator of a water supply system and/or wastewater treatment facility that loses its only certified operator in direct responsible charge for a period of up to one year.
- The OIT allows the public water supply system and/or wastewater treatment facility to hire a person who meets the minimum educational requirements and allows the OIT the time to gain the necessary experience requirements.
- Allows the OIT time to attend training and or time to study so that the OIT can take and pass the appropriate level of certification examination.

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What are the OIT requirements?

- The option to issue the OIT certificate is based on several factors.
- The water supply system and/or wastewater treatment facility OIT meets the minimum education requirements.
- The owner of the water supply system and/or wastewater treatment facility is required to submit an application, identifying the person responsible for the operation and management of a system.
- The OIT certificate will be issued to the operator for a period of up to one year. During that period, the OIT should attend training and prepare for the exam or the owner risks losing the right to have an OIT certificate. KDHE tracks OIT expiration dates and notifies the owner and OIT in advance of expiration that they must sit for the next available exam.

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For what reason will KDHE not issue an OIT?

- The water supply system and/or wastewater treatment facility has a history of not maintaining the employment of a certified operator.
- KDHE has issued the owner of a water supply system and/or wastewater treatment facility an OIT certificate and the OIT did not follow through and become certified within the time frame allowed.
- The system already has a certified operator certified at or above the level required to operate the water supply system and/or wastewater treatment facility.

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How is Reciprocity Handeled?

- If you are currently a Kansas certified water supply system and/or wastewater treatment facility operator, and are looking at relocating to another state, it is critical that you check with that state's Operator Certification Program to see how their state's certification program handles reciprocity.
- We have had several incidences over the last couple of years where a Kansas operator has accepted a job with another state or has just relocated to another state to find out that that state's certification program either would not reciprocate at all or was going to drop the operator back to a lower level of certification.
- The worse case scenario is that if the state drops you back to a lower level or will not reciprocate at all with Kansas, you would be required to meet the education and experience requirement for that state as well as take and pass that state's certification examination.

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Why didn't the training session I attended cover all of the examination questions?

- You should never expect the training sessions to cover *all* of the information needed to pass a certification examination. In order to pass an examination, an operator needs to utilize a combination of training, experience, and outside study. The training manuals published by the University of California - Sacramento are an excellent source of outside study materials.

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What is an operator in responsible charge?

- The operator in responsible charge means the person or persons designated by the owner to be the certified operator or operators who make decisions regarding the daily operational activities of a water supply system or wastewater treatment facility that will directly impact the quality or quantity of drinking water for human consumption or the quality of wastewater effluent.

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How many certified operators are required to operate a Kansas water supply or wastewater treatment facility?

- Kansas law requires that all public water supply systems or wastewater treatment facilities be under the supervision of an operator in responsible charge that is certified at or above the level required to operate that facility and be able to be contacted 24/7.
- With that being said the owner/employer can exceed the KDHE requirements and require all operators working in the day to day operations of a water supply system or wastewater treatment facility to be certified at or above what KDHE requires.

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Helpful Tip

- There is no substitute for studying, preparing and planning ahead for the operator certification exams.

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QUESTIONS?

For more information regarding any of the frequently asked questions or any questions regarding Operator Certification contact Vickie Wessel at 785-296-2976 or Teresa Schuyler at 785-296-5511

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