

# **Water Supply & Wastewater Treatment System Operators Licensing Frequently Asked Questions**

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## **General Licensed Operator FAQ's**

### **Q1. How does an individual become certified?**

The candidate must pass a DEP-approved examination for each license. The following minimum education and experience are required to be eligible for each exam. Please note the following definitions: "Associates degree" means successful completion of two years of formal education at an accredited college resulting in an engineering or related science degree or post-secondary vocational program or a bachelor's degree in a field that does not meet the requirements of the bachelor's degree category. "Bachelor's degree" means four years of formal education at an accredited college resulting in an engineering or related science degree.

#### VSWs

- Minimum of High School diploma or equivalency certificate
- Completion of NJDEP approved training course
- 6 months of operating experience

#### License Classes S-1, T-1, W-1, and C-1

- Minimum of High School diploma or equivalency certificate

- Completion of NJDEP approved training course
- One year of operating experience

#### License Classes S-2, T-2, W-2, and C-2

- Completion of DEP approved training course
- High School Diploma or equivalency certificate plus 3 years operating experience
- Associate's degree plus 2 years operating experience
- Bachelors degree plus 1.5 years operating experience

#### License Classes S-3, T-3, W-3, and C-3

- Completion of DEP approved training course
- High School Diploma or equivalency certificate plus 6 years of experience (3 years operating experience and 3 years direct responsible charge experience)
- Associates degree plus 4 years of experience (2 years operating experience and 2 years direct responsible charge experience)
- Bachelors degree plus 3 years of experience (1.5 years operating experience and 1.5 years of direct responsible charge experience)

#### License Classes S-4, T-4, W-4, and C-4

- Completion of DEP approved training course
- High School Diploma or equivalency certificate plus 10 years of experience (6 years operating experience and 4 years direct responsible charge experience)
- Associates degree plus 7 years of experience (4 years operating experience and 3 years direct responsible charge experience)
- Bachelors degree plus 5 years of experience (3 years operating experience and 2 years of direct responsible charge experience)

#### License Class N-1

- Completion of DEP approved industrial wastewater training course
- Minimum of High School diploma or equivalency certificate
- One year of operating experience

#### License Class N-2

- Completion of DEP approved industrial wastewater training course
- High School diploma or equivalency certificate plus 3 years operating experience
- Associates Degree plus 2 years operating experience
- Bachelors degree plus 1.5 years operating experience

### License Class N-3

- Completion of DEP approved industrial wastewater training course
- High School diploma or equivalency certificate plus 6 years operating experience
- Associates Degree plus 4 years operating experience
- Bachelors degree plus 3 years operating experience

### License Class N-4

- Completion of DEP approved industrial wastewater training course
- High School diploma or equivalency certificate plus 10 years operating experience
- Associates Degree plus 7 years operating experience
- Bachelors degree plus 5 years operating experience

### **Q2. How long are licenses valid?**

Licenses are valid from the date of issuance to September 30. License holders receive renewal invoices every August. Renewal and initial invoices are available online [here](#). If a previous license holder fails to renew a license within one year following the renewal date of the license, a license will not be issued until the current requirements for the license are met and a new qualifying exam is passed.

### **Q3. What is operating experience?**

Operating experience is the time spent in the satisfactory performance of operational duties at a system which is acceptable to the Board of Examiners which reviews Statements of Qualifications included in every application. For an industrial wastewater treatment system (N) license, manufacturing and process experience may be acceptable in lieu of operating experience.

### **Q4. What is direct responsible charge experience?**

Direct responsible charge experience means active, daily, on-site supervision, including operation and maintenance responsibilities in a system with a classification no less than one classification lower than the license sought. This experience shall be gained while in possession of a license no less than one grade lower than the license sought.

**Q5. Does New Jersey grant reciprocity to out-of-state license holders?**

Individuals holding licenses issued by other State(s) may apply to the Board of Examiners to be considered for an equivalent New Jersey license. The applicant must meet the minimum education and experience requirements for the New Jersey license and must have passed an examination that is considered equivalent to the New Jersey exam. Also, New Jersey may only grant reciprocity for another State's license if that State grants reciprocity to New Jersey licensees.

**Q6. Can I pay my renewal fee online?**

Yes. Go to [DEP Online](#) and select Pay for a License (listed under Non-Registered Services). You must have your invoice number, license number and credit card/checking account information available to utilize this service. Renewal and initial invoice numbers are available online [here](#).

**Q7. How do I notify DEP that I will no longer be serving as the licensed operator in charge at a system or that I am the new licensed operator at a system?**

Complete and submit the [DEP-065 form "Licensed Operator in Charge Employment Notification Form \(Water\)](#) or the [DEP-065 form "Licensed Operator in Charge Employment Notification Form \(Wastewater\)](#) to the Bureau of Licensing & Registration. The form must be completed and signed by both the licensed operator and the system owner or administrator. Licensed operators shall notify DEP at least two weeks prior to changing positions or employment. The owner of a system employing a new licensed operator shall notify DEP within two weeks after the licensed operator begins his/her employment.

**Q8. How can I look up the license information for a water and/or wastewater system operator?**

Click [here](#) to get a report all water and wastewater license holders which includes information on what license(s) they currently hold.

## **Application FAQ's**

### **Q9. How do I apply for an examination?**

For T, W, S, C, N, or VSWS license(s) complete Examination Application for License to Operate ([Form #ADM-035](#)) and the accompanying Statement of Qualifications ([Form #ADM-035A](#)). Include documentation of High School Diploma and completion of necessary training courses. The statement of qualifications must include an original signature by the appropriate signatory which is typically the licensed operator in charge at the system but in some cases may be the system owner or administrator. The non-refundable \$70 application fee must be included with each individual application. Applications that are received without the appropriate documentation and/or fee will be returned without Board of Examiner review. Applications must be postmarked no later than February 1st for the March exam, June 1st for the July exam, and September 1st for the October exam.

### **Q10. When are the application closing dates?**

The application closing dates are February 1st for the March examination, June 1st for the July examination and September 1st for the October examination. Applications must be postmarked by the closing dates.

### **Q11. Can you apply for more than one exam on the same application?**

No, you must submit a separate application for each license type applied for, you must have an updated Statement of Qualifications for each license type.

### **Q12. Can I apply for more than one exam in the same exam cycle?**

You may apply for multiple exams in the same exam cycle. However, a separate exam application and a separate \$70 fee must be submitted for each license type, and all individual applications and fees must be sent together in one package.

The same Statement of Qualifications, each with an original signature (no copies), must be provided for each exam application indicating the appropriate percentage of time for each job duty. The Board will immediately reject all applications where inconsistent information is presented on multiple applications.

Exams have a 3-hour time limit therefore applicants may take no more than two exams per day. If you are approved to take more than two exams in the same exam cycle, third and subsequent exams will be scheduled on different day(s).

## Exam FAQ's

### **Q13. How often are the examinations given?**

Examinations for Licensed Operators are given three times a year in March, July and October.

### **Q14. Can I reschedule my exam?**

Yes, examinations may be rescheduled but only for emergency situations. Please send a letter to our office detailing why you could not make the scheduled exam and that you wish to be scheduled for the next examination. Note that an additional \$70 fee will be required for any rescheduled exam because once the exam booklets are ordered, they cannot be returned or refunded.

### **Q15. After taking an exam, how will I be notified of the results?**

Approximately 7 to 10 working days following the exams, the names of candidates that Passed an exam will be posted [here](#). If your name does not appear on the Passed list, then you failed that exam and you will receive a copy of the exam analysis via email. If you passed an exam, you will receive a bill for the initial license fee within 2 to 3 weeks or you can check online for your invoice at any time by clicking [here](#). Candidates that pass an exam will only be provided an analysis of their test results upon request via email through [www@dep.nj.gov](mailto:www@dep.nj.gov). No one is permitted to review the actual exams in accordance with the exam vendor's protocol.

### **Q16. I work at a utility that has multiple water and/or wastewater facility classifications. If I have one year total operating experience, does that satisfy the experience needed to qualify to take multiple examinations (e.g., both treatment and conveyance, or both water and wastewater treatment, etc.)?**

The Board reviews applications to determine if the applicant meets exam admission criteria on a case-by-case basis. The Board of Examiners may consider the percentage of time documented for job duties in terms of relevance to each license type, with the understanding that certain job duties may be specific to one license type and others may overlap. If you have gained experience in multiple areas (e.g., treatment and conveyance) during the same period of time while employed in the same position, please specify the appropriate percentages of time in each area.

Individuals must have the appropriate amount of documented experience in each area in order to be eligible for each exam. An applicant employed solely in one specific area of operations who demonstrates little or no experience in the area for which the license is sought will not be approved for admission to that exam. For this reason, particularly for class 1 and class 2 exams, an applicant employed at a smaller utility where he is the jack-of-all-trades may be better

positioned to acquire the experience needed to qualify for multiple license types more expeditiously than an applicant employed at a larger utility with a more specialized job position. The latter applicant may need to serve in multiple positions in different areas of operations in order to demonstrate the appropriate amount of experience needed to qualify for multiple license types.

## **Courses & Continuing Education FAQ's**

### **Q17. What courses are acceptable for operator license renewal?**

Only water-related courses are accepted for water licenses. Only wastewater-related courses are accepted for wastewater licenses. Some courses may be valid for both water and wastewater licenses.

1. Water/wastewater-related Continuing Education Units (CEUs) that adhere to the criteria set forth by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET) are accepted on the basis of 1 CEU = 10 TCHs.
2. Training programs and courses that have been approved by NJDEP are accepted. These courses will have NJDEP course approval numbers.
3. College credit for courses which are directly relevant to the operation, maintenance or management of a wastewater or water system and which address influences on water quality, public health or environmental protection will be issued 15 TCHs for each credit hour.

### **Q18. What are the continuing education requirements for license renewal?**

License holders must acquire Training Contact Hours (TCHs) in order to meet continuing education requirements for license renewal. The minimum number of TCHs specified for each license must be acquired within fixed three-year cycles. An individual that is licensed for less than the full three-year cycle is not required to obtain TCHs for license renewal during that initial three-year cycle. For new licensees, the TCH requirement does not take effect until the following three-year cycle. If a license upgrade is acquired during the same three-year cycle, the TCH requirement for the lesser license classification is required. For example, a licensee that holds a T-2 license at the start of the three-year cycle and upgrades the license to a T-3 within the same three-year period, will be required to obtain 18 TCHs, NOT 36 TCHs.

The fixed three-year cycles are:

- October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2021 and every three years thereafter



The number of TCHs required every three-year cycle for license types:

- C-3, C-4, N-3, N-4, S-3, S-4, T-3, T-4, W-3, W-4  
36 hrs (maximum of 12 hrs will be accepted in Safety related training)
- C-1, C-2, N-1, N-2, S-1, S-2, T-1, T-2, W-1, W-2  
18 hrs (maximum of 6 hrs will be accepted in Safety related training)
- VSWS  
12 hrs (maximum of 4 hrs will be accepted in Safety related training)

#### All Licenses

- 7 TCHs are awarded for passing an examination in the appropriate field
- 3 TCHs are awarded for any Red Cross conducted or sponsored First Aid or CPR Class
- 1 TCH is awarded for each year or part thereof for membership in the NJ Section of the American Water Works Association (NJAWWA) for water licenses. (maximum of 3 TCHs may be applied for memberships for each applicable license per cycle)
- 1 TCH is awarded for each year or part thereof for membership in the NJ Water Environment Association (NJWEA) for wastewater licenses (maximum of 3 TCHs may be applied for memberships for each applicable license per cycle)
- 0.5 TCH is awarded for each year or part thereof for membership in any other water/wastewater professional association recognized by the Advisory Committee (maximum of 3 TCHs may be applied for memberships for each applicable license)
- • hour-per-hour (maximum of 36 hrs) is awarded to Instructors of the initial certification courses (Intro to Water/Wastewater, Advanced Water, Advanced Wastewater, Collection Systems, Industrial Wastewater Treatment, and VSWS training) toward the appropriate license

#### **Q19. What are the DEP-approved training courses and who provides them?**

The following required training courses are provided by several academic institutions, click [here](#)

- Introduction to Water/Wastewater Course for T1, W1, S1, C1
- Advanced Water Course for T2, W2
- Advanced Wastewater Course S2
- Collections Course for C2
- Industrial Wastewater Course for N1, N2, N3, N4
- Very Small Water System Course for VSWS

## **Q20. What are the California State – Sacramento At Home Correspondence Course Alternatives?**

The CA State At Home Correspondence courses are DEP-approved alternatives to the classroom training courses discussed in previous FAQ#6. The correspondence courses are NOT online courses and require material purchases at [www.owp.csus.edu](http://www.owp.csus.edu).

Please be aware that any person holding a college degree (related/non-related) and seeking an advanced course is REQUIRED to complete ALL the course volumes for that classification unless they hold the Class 1 license and completed the NJ classroom Introduction to Water and Wastewater course. There is an EXCEPTION for W2 licenses which require completion of all CA State courses.

### Water Treatment

T1 License:

NJ classroom course - Introduction to Water and Wastewater

OR

CA State course - Water Treatment Plant Operations Volume I

T2 License:

NJ classroom course - Advanced Water

OR

CA State courses - Water Treatment Plant Operations Volume I

Water Treatment Plant Operations Volume II

Utility Management

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W1 License:

NJ classroom course - Introduction to Water and Wastewater

OR

CA State course - Water Distribution System Operation & Maintenance

W2 License:

NJ classroom course - Advanced Water

OR

CA State courses - Water Distribution System Operation & Maintenance

Utility Management

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### Wastewater Treatment

S1 License:

NJ classroom course - Introduction to Water and Wastewater

OR

CA State course - Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants Volume I

S2 License:

NJ classroom course - Advanced Wastewater Treatment

OR

CA State courses - Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants Volume I

Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants Volume II

Advanced Waste Treatment

Utility Management

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C1 License:

NJ classroom course - Introduction to Water and Wastewater

OR

CA State course - Operation & Maintenance of Wastewater Collection Systems Volume I

C2 License:

NJ classroom course - Advanced Collection

OR

CA State courses - Operation & Maintenance of Wastewater Collection Systems Volume I

Operation & Maintenance of Wastewater Collection Systems Volume II

Utility Management

N1, N2, N3, and N4:

NJ classroom course - Industrial Wastewater

OR

CA State Courses - Industrial Waste Treatment, Volume I

Industrial Waste Treatment, Volume II

Utility Management

**Q21. How can I find out how many Training Contact Hours (TCHs) I have received and how many are needed for license renewal?**

Click [here](#) to get a report of the training contact hours that have been recorded for your license(s).

**Q22. Who do I contact if I was not credited for Training Contact Hours (TCHs)?**

Please contact your course provider who is responsible for supplying and verifying all training credits to NJDEP. See our list of known course providers

at [https://www.nj.gov/dep/exams/docs/TCH Course Providers List.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/dep/exams/docs/TCH_Course_Providers_List.pdf)

**Q23. I have completed the required training course(s) to be eligible to sit for an examination. Am I eligible for reimbursement by the DEP?**

Please refer to either the fact sheet for [water](#) or [wastewater](#) to see if you meet the eligibility requirements. If you do, then complete the appropriate application form [BSDW-OC-01](#) or [DEP-125](#) to submit the reimbursement request.

**Q24. I want to become a training provider of water/wastewater related courses. How do I obtain approval from the DEP?**

Complete and submit the [TCH provider application package](#).

**Q25. As a training provider how can I verify my courses and associated rosters have been entered in your system?**

Click [here](#) to get a report of the training contact hours that have been recorded for your organization.

Click [here](#) to get a report of the training contact hours that have been recorded for your organization with the rosters.

**Q26. As a training provider who do I contact if my courses and rosters have not been entered or the information is incorrect?**

If your course is not listed or the information is incorrect please contact us at [TCH@dep.nj.gov](mailto:TCH@dep.nj.gov)