

CHAPTER 710. WATERWORKS AND WASTEWATER WORKS OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

[Authority: 27A O.S., § 2-2-101, 2-2-201; and 59 O.S., § 1101 et seq.]

[Source: 27A O.S., § 2-2-101, 2-2-201; and 59 O.S., § 1101 et seq.; Codified 6-12-00]

SUBCHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

252:710-1-1. Purpose, authority, and applicability

(a) **Purpose.** This Chapter establishes procedures for persons seeking certification as waterworks and wastewater works operators and laboratory operators.

(b) **Authority.** This Chapter is authorized by 27A O.S. § 2-1-101, 59 O.S. § 1101 *et seq.* and the *Final Guidelines for the Certification and Recertification of the Operators of Community and Nontransient Noncommunity Public Water Systems* (Federal Register, Volume 64, No. 24, Friday, February 5, 1999) adopted by the U.S.E.P.A. under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

(c) **Applicability.** The rules in this Chapter apply to any person who seeks certification from or is certified by the Department of Environmental Quality ("DEQ") to operate waterworks, wastewater works, distribution and collection systems, and laboratories owned by or associated with waterworks/wastewater works. The rules also apply to any person who seeks certification from or is certified by DEQ as a technician for distribution and collection systems. The rules also apply to non-certified helpers and temporary operators.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-1-2. Duty to comply

Each person certified under this Chapter shall comply with the Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operator Certification Act ("Act") and this Chapter, the Code and its rules, terms and conditions of the certification, and any final order issued by the Executive Director. Failure to comply may result in administrative, civil, or criminal enforcement actions.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-1-3. Synonymous terms

For purposes of this Chapter, the term "waterworks or wastewater works laboratory operator" is synonymous with "laboratory operator".

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20]

252:710-1-4. Definitions

In addition to the definitions contained in the Environmental Quality Code (27A O.S. § 2-1-101 *et seq.*), and the Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operator Certification Act (59 O.S. § 1101 *et seq.*), the following words and terms, when used in this Chapter, shall have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

"**Act**" means the Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operator Certification Act, 59 O.S. § 1101 *et seq.*

"**Associated laboratory**" means any laboratory, not directly owned by or located on the premises of a waterworks or wastewater works facility, that performs required laboratory tests for the facility.

"**Available**" means on-site or able to be contacted as needed to initiate the appropriate action in a timely manner.

"**Certificate year**" means July 1 through June 30.

"**Certification**" means a certification issued by DEQ pursuant to this Chapter.

"**Class associated examination**" means an operator certification examination which is given at the end of a classroom instruction for the level of certification taught. Only class participants may take a class

associated exam. In addition, the applicant shall have submitted an approved examination application.

"Classroom training" means DEQ approved professional development training taking place in a classroom or practical learning environment and attended in person by class participants, and also referred to as "in-person training."

"Code" means the Oklahoma Environmental Quality Code, 27A O.S. § 2-1-101 *et seq.*

"Collection system" means pipes or conduits, pumping stations, force mains, and all other facilities used to collect or conduct wastewater to a treatment works.

"Complexity" means difficulty in controlling water quality, potential effect to the consumer and/or safety of the operator.

"DEQ" means the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality.

"DEQ approved training" means training that has been evaluated and approved by DEQ in advance of the scheduled training date with DEQ assigning a class identification number upon approval.

"Direct supervision" means the on-site supervision or direction provided by a certified operator of a non-certified helper during which the certified operator is present at all times. A non-certified helper shall work under direct supervision.

"Distribution and Collection Technician" means a person who works solely on distribution and collection lines and is not in responsible charge.

"Distribution system" means any combination of pipes, tanks, pumps, or other equipment which delivers water from the source(s) and/or treatment facility(ies) to the consumer.

"Distribution system complexity" means pressure zones, booster stations, storage tanks, fire protection, chlorination, nonresidential consumers, cross connection potential, and/or demand variations.

"Environmental professional" means an individual with an undergraduate degree related to and practicing in the fields of biological sciences, biology, engineering, physical science, hydrology, geology, mathematics, environmental science, chemistry, microbiology, toxicology, or civil, chemical, sanitary, or environmental engineering.

"General course" means a DEQ approved training class or classes that directly relate to waterworks, wastewater works, waterworks laboratories, or wastewater works laboratories and that meet the requirements of OAC 252:710-3-36 for content and hours, to be utilized solely for the purpose of professional development and certification renewal.

"General supervision" means supervision or direction provided by a certified operator to a temporary operator and requires that the certified operator be available to help or advise but during which the certified operator need not be present at all times. While under general supervision, a temporary operator may work alone.

"Groundwater system" means a waterworks where all water is obtained from dug, drilled, bored, or driven wells or infiltration lines not under the influence of surface water contamination, but not springs which are a surface water supply.

"Laboratory operator" means an individual who is in general supervision of a laboratory which performs laboratory analyses for waterworks and wastewater works and who is responsible for the accuracy of the laboratory tests and reports for the facility, but who does not operate the waterworks or wastewater works unless appropriately certified as an operator for that facility type.

"Lagoon" means a soil or lined basin, either below or above ground level, which is designed, maintained, and/or operated to store, recycle, and/or treat municipal/domestic wastewater.

"Licensed experience" means the time spent at a plant or system in performance of operational duties with the appropriate level of certification by certification holder.

"Minor public water supply system" means a water system that does not meet the definition of a Public Water Supply System. Minor public water supply systems are regulated by OAC 252:624.

"Non-certified helper" means a person under direct supervision who assists in the performance of work that may affect the quality and/or quantity of either water or wastewater and is properly registered as provided in 252:710-5-55.

"OAC" means Oklahoma Administrative Code.

"Open examination" means an operator certification examination which may be taken by an individual whose experience, training, and education exempts the individual from in-class participation for the level of certification being tested. Applications shall be submitted and approved by DEQ prior to examination.

"Operator" means any certified person who is at any time responsible for the operation of a wastewater works or waterworks facility or associated laboratories. "Operator" shall not ordinarily apply to an official exercising general administrative supervision, but shall apply to any properly certified person who can, through a direct act or command, affect the quality and/or quantity of the water or wastewater.

"Operating experience" means the time spent at a plant or system in performance of operational duties with the appropriate level of certification by certification holder.

"Operating shift" means that period of time during which operator decisions that affect public health and environment are necessary for proper operation of the system.

"Operational assistance" means providing regulatory or consulting technical assistance to water/wastewater works systems.

"O.S." means Oklahoma Statutes.

"Owner" means any business entity, homeowners' association, or government entity, including the State of Oklahoma, municipalities, counties, districts, and all subdivisions thereof.

"Professional development hours (PDH)" means hours of DEQ approved training that may be used to meet the requirements of OAC 252:710-1-7 for certification or renewal.

"Public Water Supply (PWS) system" means any system providing water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances, if such system has at least fifteen (15) service connections or regularly serves an average of at least twenty-five (25) individuals daily at least sixty (60) days per year, whether receiving payment for same or not. Multi-family dwellings, manufactured home communities, mobile home parks, recreational vehicle (RV) parks, and correctional facilities, which are constructed, inspected and maintained under a State or locally approved plumbing code, purchase water from a permitted water system, do not provide treatment, and do not resell water, are not classified as a Public Water Supply system. The following are the categories of Public Water Supply systems:

(A) **"Community water system"** means any PWS system that serves at least fifteen (15) service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least twenty-five (25) year-round residents.

(B) **"Non-community water system"** means any PWS system that serves an average of at least twenty-five (25) individuals at least sixty (60) days per year but is neither a community water system nor a non-transient non-community water system.

(C) **"Non-transient non-community (NTNC) water system"** means any PWS system that is not a community water system and that regularly serves at least twentyfive (25) of the same persons over six (6) months per year.

"Purchased water system" means a water supply system which buys its water from a waterworks and has a mastermeter.

"Reciprocity" means a recognition by DEQ of the validity of a certification granted by another state, so long as that state recognizes certifications issued by DEQ as well.

"Responsible charge" means making decisions regarding the daily operational activities of

(A) a public water system, water treatment facility, and/or distribution system that will directly impact the quality and/or quantity of drinking water; or

(B) a wastewater system, wastewater treatment facility, and/or collection system.

"Shared operator" means a person contracted and/or hired by one or more municipalities, sewer improvement districts, water or sewer public trusts, rural water or sewer districts, consortium of small publicly owned water supply or wastewater systems, substate planning districts, or the Oklahoma Rural Water Association to operate two or more small system(s) pursuant to the requirements set forth in 252:710-7-2.

"Small drinking water system" means a waterworks with a population of five hundred (500) or less that meets the definition of a PWS.

"Small wastewater system" means a nonindustrial wastewater treatment system which has an average flow of five thousand (5,000) gallons per day or less

"Standard course" means a DEQ approved training class or classes that directly relate to waterworks, wastewater works, waterworks laboratories, or wastewater works laboratories. Classes shall meet the requirements of OAC 252:710-3-36 for content and hours, completed in preparation for an operator certification examination.

"Superintendent" means an operator in direct responsible charge of day to day operations of an entire plant, distribution system, or collection system.

"Supervisor" means an individual who directs and inspects the work of operators, helpers, or plumbers/contractors.

"Temporary operator" means a person holding a temporary certification who may perform the duties of a certified operator under the general supervision of an appropriately certified operator.

"Validated examination" means a DEQ approved examination that is independently reviewed by subject matter experts to ensure that the examination is based on a job analysis and related to the classification of the system or facility.

"Wastewater treatment works" means wastewater treatment systems and facilities used in the collection, transmission, storage, pumping, treatment, or disposal of liquid or waterborne wastes.

"Water treatment facility" means any place(s) where a community water system or non-transient non-community water system alters the physical or chemical characteristics of the drinking water. Chlorination may be considered as a function of a distribution system.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 24 Ok Reg 1556, eff 6-15-07; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-1-5. Application requirements

(a) **Application and fee.** The application shall be submitted to DEQ with a nonrefundable \$62.00 fee at least twenty-one (21) days before the first day of standard course for class associated examination or at least twenty-one (21) days before the non-class associated examination date requested. The application shall be clearly written and signed by the applicant. All certification requirements listed in Appendix B shall be completed prior to examination.

(b) **Required documentation.** An applicant shall submit the following documents with an application for certification:

- (1) Evidence of age;
- (2) Proof of current, valid license, or certificate from another state or territory where the requirements for licensure or certification are equivalent to the rules of this Chapter, if applicable;
- (3) Confirmation of licensed experience and required training, including but not limited to official academic transcripts, letters of verification from employers, and/or a record of attendance at seminars; and
- (4) Signed and notarized affidavit regarding legal status in the country.

(c) **DEQ review.** DEQ will not approve an application unless the applicant has complied with this section.

(d) **Forfeit.** If an applicant has not taken the examination within 120 days after initial approved examination, the applicant forfeits the \$62.00 nonrefundable fee and shall reapply.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-1-6. Examinations

(a) An applicant shall take and pass a validated examination that demonstrates that the applicant has the necessary skills, knowledge, ability, and judgment as appropriate for the classification. The applicant shall answer at least 70% of the questions correctly on the validated examination. An applicant who does not receive a passing grade on the validated examination must wait a minimum of thirty (30) days to retake the examination.

(b) Validated examinations shall be administered by DEQ or its designee at such times and places as necessary.

(c) Validated examinations, answer sheets, and test scores are confidential and shall not be disclosed to any person except the applicant. Proper identification may be required.

(d) An applicant determined to have cheated on a validated examination shall be deemed to have failed the validated examination and shall be prohibited from applying for certification for a period of twelve (12) months.

(e) DEQ may approve a designee to give oral validated examinations to Distribution and Collection Technicians who are unable to take a written validated examination.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-1-7. Renewals

(a) **Renewal procedure.** All certificate holders are responsible for renewing or reactivating their certification by the annual renewal date. Failure to receive a renewal invoice does not extend the renewal deadline. The renewal invoice shall be completed and submitted to DEQ with all applicable fees by 4:30 P.M. CST on or before the end of the certificate year (June 30.). If any date specified in this section falls on a weekend or holiday, the date of the following working day shall be the effective date.

(b) **Failure to renew.** A person may apply for reactivation of an expired certificate, within two (2) certificate years of expiration, by demonstrating that all professional development training requirements have been met in accordance with 252:710-1-7(f) and paying all applicable renewal fees in accordance with 252:710-1-12. Any person whose certification has expired for a period exceeding two (2) certificate years shall re-apply in accordance with 252:710-1-5 and take a validated examination in accordance with 252:710-1-6. Previous experience and training will be taken into consideration under 252:710-1-5.

(c) **Professional development training.** In order to renew a certification, the certification holder shall complete the required amount of approved training hours per certification year, as provided in Appendix C of this Chapter. For holders of multiple certifications, the number of hours required is based on the highest level of certification held.

(d) **Exception.** A person who submits all documentation required by 252:710-1-5 and passes the validated examination as required by 252:710-1-6 between April 1 and May 31 shall not be required to renew the newly obtained certification until June of the next calendar year. (For military personnel, see 72 O.S. § 48.2, Extension and Renewal of Professional Licenses.)

(e) **Nonresidents.** A nonresident who holds an Oklahoma certification may renew by paying applicable fees and providing evidence of completion of the required number of professional development hours per certification year as provided in Appendix C of this Chapter.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 19 Ok Reg 1722, eff 6-13-02; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00]

252:710-1-7.1. Submission of standard and general courses

(a) **Standard courses.** Any approved instructor per 252:710-3-37 shall:

- (1) submit a written standard course request, along with a syllabus and agenda to DEQ for approval at least forty-two (42) days prior to the standard course being held;
- (2) provide DEQ with quantity of proposed professional development hours to be included with the standard course; and
- (3) submit a record of attendance utilizing the approved DEQ form within ten (10) days after the training was provided.

(b) **In-person general courses.** Any instructor requesting approval for general courses, such as in-person conferences, shall:

- (1) submit a written general course request, along with a syllabus and agenda to DEQ for approval at least forty-two (42) days prior to the general course being held;
- (2) provide DEQ with documentation of a minimum of four (4) hours of proposed professional development hours, not including breaks, to be included with the general course; and
- (3) submit a record of attendance utilizing the approved DEQ form within ten (10) days after the training was provided.

(c) **Other general courses.** Any instructor requesting approval for general courses, such as webinars and online courses, shall:

- (1) submit a written general course request, along with a syllabus and agenda to DEQ for approval at least forty-two (42) days prior to the general course being held;

- (2) provide DEQ with documentation of a minimum of thirty (30) minutes of proposed professional development hours, not including breaks, to be included with the general course; and
- (3) submit a record of attendance utilizing the approved DEQ form within ten (10) days after the training was provided.

[Source: Added at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-1-8. Operator disciplinary actions

(a) **Grounds for action.** DEQ may, after notice and opportunity for an individual proceeding, permanently revoke, revoke for a set time, or suspend a certification for good cause including, but not limited to:

- (1) Gross inefficiency or incompetence,
- (2) Violation of any provisions of the Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operator Certification Act or applicable provisions of the Oklahoma Environmental Quality Code, rules promulgated thereunder or the terms of any certificate or order issued pursuant thereto; or,
- (3) Fraud or misrepresentation in obtaining a certificate.

(b) **Suspension.** A suspended certification may be reinstated by DEQ upon application and payment of all fees. In order to be reinstated, the person making application:

- (1) shall satisfy all training requirements in accordance with this Chapter;
- (2) may be required by DEQ to retake the certification examination, at a level not to exceed the prior level of certification, and score at least a 70%, and;
- (3) who fails to receive a passing grade on the re-examination may be required to wait one year before taking the examination again. A person holding a suspended certification may work as a non-certified helper under the supervision of a person certified by DEQ.

(c) **Revocation.** After the expiration of any revocation of a certification pursuant to the Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operator Certification Act that is not a permanent revocation, the holder of such certificate may make application to DEQ for reinstatement. Such reinstatement shall be made at the discretion of DEQ. In order to be considered for reinstatement, the person making application shall:

- (1) satisfy all training requirements in accordance with this Chapter, and;
- (2) score at least a 70% on the certification examination at a level not to exceed the prior level of certification.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Amended at 40 Ok Reg 2058, eff 9-15-23; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00]

252:710-1-9. Certificate issuance prohibited

DEQ shall not issue a certification if the applicant:

- (1) is not in compliance with the Act, the Code, or rules of DEQ;
- (2) holds a revoked or suspended certification from a different operator level;
- (3) was determined to have cheated on an operator certification examination;
- (4) had any certification permanently revoked; or
- (5) misrepresented or omitted material facts on an application within the past year.

[Source: Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00]

252:710-1-10. Certification documentation

DEQ will provide a wall certificate upon initial certification.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20]

252:710-1-11. Identification credentials

DEQ will provide identification credentials upon certification, classification change, and/or renewal.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-1-12. Fee Schedules

(a) **Operators of waterworks or wastewater works.** Certification, renewal, and registration fees for operators of waterworks or wastewater works are:

- (1) \$62.00 per certification application;
- (2) \$46.00 per certification renewal;
- (3) \$23.00 per non-certified helper certificate ;
- (4) \$23.00 per non-certified helper certificate renewal;
- (5) \$8.00 reinstatement fee per certification per month expired; and
- (6) \$8.00 late payment of application fee per month not received after date of certification examination, following a grace period of thirty (30) days after examination.

(b) **Operators of laboratories owned by or associated with waterworks or wastewater works.**

Certification fees for operators of laboratories owned by or associated with waterworks or wastewater works are:

- (1) \$62.00 per certification application;
- (2) \$46.00 per certification renewal;
- (3) \$8.00 reinstatement fee per certification per month expired; and
- (4) \$8.00 late payment of application fee per month not received after date of certification examination, following a grace period of thirty (30) days after examination.

(c) **Failure to timely pay fees.** If an application fee and/or any late fees as described in (a) and (b) above are not received within 180 days of date of certification examination the results of examination are nullified and the applicant shall reapply to sit for a certification examination.

(d) **Nonrefundable.** Fees charged under this section are not refundable.

(e) **Nontransferable.** Fees may not be transferred from one applicant to another.

(f) **Automatic fee adjustment.** To assist in meeting rising costs to DEQ of the operator certification program associated with licensing and enforcement of certified operators, the fees set out in paragraphs (a) and (b) above shall be automatically adjusted on July 1st every year to correspond to the percentage, if any, by which the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the most recent calendar year exceeds the CPI for the calendar year immediately preceding the start of that most recent calendar year. DEQ may round the adjusted fees up to the nearest dollar. DEQ may waive collection of an automatic increase in a given year if it determines other revenues, including appropriated state general revenue funds, have increased sufficiently to make the funds generated by the automatic adjustment unnecessary in that year. A waiver does not affect future automatic adjustments.

(1) Any automatic fee adjustment under this subsection may be averted or eliminated, or the adjustment percentage may be modified, by rule promulgated pursuant to the Oklahoma Administrative Procedures Act. The rulemaking process may be initiated in any manner provided by law, including a petition for rulemaking pursuant to 75 O.S. § 305 and OAC 252:4-5-3 by any person affected by the automatic fee adjustment.

(2) If the United States Department of Labor ceases to publish the CPI or revises the methodology or base years, no further automatic fee adjustments shall occur until a new automatic fee adjustment rule is promulgated pursuant to the Oklahoma Administrative Procedures Act.

(3) For purposes of this subsection, "Consumer Price Index" or "CPI" means the Consumer Price Index - All Urban Consumers (U.S. All Items, Current Series, 1982-1984=100, CUUR0000SA0) published by the United States Department of Labor. The CPI for a calendar year is the figure denoted by the Department of Labor as the "Annual" index figure for that calendar year.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 22 Ok Reg 1491, eff 6-15-05; Amended at 25 Ok Reg 2378, eff 7-11-08; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20]

SUBCHAPTER 3. CERTIFICATION

252:710-3-31. Certificate required

(a) **General requirement.** The following shall hold certifications issued under the Act and this Chapter:

- (1) All persons who make decisions regarding the daily operational activities of:

(A) a public water system, water treatment facility and/or distribution system that will directly impact the quality and/or quantity of drinking water, including a non-transient non-community water system; or

(B) a wastewater system, wastewater treatment facility, and/or collection system.

(2) All persons who program or maintain telemetry/SCADA systems or make process control/system integrity decisions.

(3) All laboratory operators who are in general supervision of waterworks/wastewater works laboratory control tests.

(b) **Exceptions.** The following exceptions apply:

(1) **Plumbers and contractors.** Plumbers licensed by the Construction Industries Board and contractors working under the general supervision of such plumbers are not required to obtain certification for construction, maintenance, or renovation of water/wastewater works systems. Such plumbers may also make connections to public water systems or lines or sewer systems or lines. All work performed shall be supervised and inspected by the responsible entity to ensure compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, OAC 252:626; and OAC 252:656 and 27A O.S. § 2-6-101 *et seq.*

(2) **Non-community and minor systems.** Non-community or minor systems are not required to have certified operators unless warranted by the complexity determined by DEQ.

(3) **Small public sewage systems.** Nonindustrial wastewater treatment works which have an average flow of five thousand (5,000) gallons per day or less are not required to have certified operators.

(4) **Populations of 1,500 or less.** For laboratory operators of distribution/collection systems or chlorinated groundwater systems serving populations of 1,500 or less where chlorination is used only for disinfection or total retention lagoons serving populations of less than 1,500, laboratory operator certification is not required. If DEQ determines that additional tests which shall be performed by a certified laboratory operator are necessary, the laboratory operator shall obtain the applicable certification or use the services of an associated laboratory.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 22 Ok Reg 1491, eff 6-15-05; Amended at 23 Ok Reg 1773, eff 6-15-06; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20]

252:710-3-32. Types of certifications

(a) **Waterworks/Wastewater Works Operator.** Class A, B, C, and D available.

(b) **Waterworks/Wastewater Works Laboratory Operator.** Class A, B, and C available.

(c) **Distribution and Collection Operator.** Class C available.

(d) **Distribution and Collection Technician.** Class T available.

(e) **Temporary.** A person age eighteen (18) or older who does not hold a valid certification shall apply for temporary certification as a waterworks or wastewater works operator within ten (10) days after being hired or appointed. A temporary certification is valid for one year from the date of employment and is not renewable. Certification testing fees may be waived for temporary certification holders who have made application for certification within 180 days of the date of issuance of temporary certification. A testing fee may only be waived one time for each applicant for temporary certification. DEQ may issue a temporary certification where a person, not already having a valid certification, has applied for a certification class and paid the applicable fee. Not more than one temporary certificate shall be issued to the same individual during any five (5) year period. Temporary certification is not available to superintendents, assistant superintendents, supervisors, or managers of superintendents who make decisions regarding the daily operational activities of water/wastewater works.

(f) **Special Non-Operational Certification for Environmental Professionals.** DEQ may allow qualified environmental professionals (as defined in 252:710-1-4) to obtain a special non-operator certification, provided that the applicant completes the required DEQ approved training and passes the applicable examination. The purpose of this certification is to verify an individual's fundamental understanding of operating knowledge. This special non-operator certification would be available for Class A-C certifications but would not certify the individual as being qualified to operate a water or wastewater system. No work experience obtained under this certification will apply towards the hands-on experience

needed for any other operator certification. The same annual professional development hours referenced in Appendix B of this Chapter apply to this certification.

[Source: Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Amended at 22 Ok Reg 1491, eff 6-15-05]

252:710-3-33. Classes of facilities

Waterworks, wastewater works, and distribution/collection systems are categorized into classes in Appendix A based on complexity.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-3-34. Classes of certifications

(a) **Certifications required.** Waterworks and wastewater works operator certifications are categorized into classes based on experience and training, as specified in Appendix B. Any facility subject to these rules shall be operated under the direct supervision of an appropriately certified operator in responsible charge.

(b) **Operator(s) in responsible charge.** The manager/superintendent/operator(s) in responsible charge shall hold a valid certification equal to or higher than the classification of the water/wastewater system being operated, including each treatment facility and/or distribution/collection system.

(c) **Assistant superintendents or assistant supervisors.** Assistant superintendents, assistant supervisors, shift leaders, and all other supervisors shall be certified at the same class as or one class lower than the facility for which they are responsible.

(d) **Others.** All other persons who make decisions regarding the daily operational activities of a waterworks or wastewater works facility, including decisions directly impacting the quality and/or quantity of drinking water, programming or maintaining telemetry/SCADA systems, and process control or system integrity decisions, shall be certified at the same class as or one class lower than the facility for which they are responsible.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 21 Ok Reg 1645, eff 6-11-04; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-3-35. Requirements for certification

(a) **Education.** Applicants for certification as a Class A - D waterworks/wastewater works distribution and/or collection operator shall have a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma. Licensed experience and/or training may be substituted.

(b) **Experience and training.** Applicants shall comply with the licensed experience and training requirements in Appendix B.

(c) **Examinations.** Applicants shall pass the appropriate validated examination in accordance with 252:710-1-6.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00]

252:710-3-36. Approved equivalents for waterworks/wastewater works operators

(a) **Experience.** One year of licensed operational assistance to water or wastewater facilities in addition to an undergraduate degree in biological sciences, biology, engineering, physical science, hydrology, geology, mathematics, environmental science, chemistry, microbiology, toxicology, or civil, chemical, sanitary or environmental engineering, or equivalent sciences may be substituted for five (5) years of experience. However, this approved equivalent does not count towards the hands-on operational experience required to obtain Class A or B certifications.

(b) **Training.** For certification of waterworks/wastewater works operators, applicants for any operator certification may substitute the following for the training requirements listed in Appendix B:

(1) **Academic credit.** Successful completion of one (1) semester hour of higher education courses in biological sciences, biology, engineering, physical science, hydrology, geology, mathematics,

environmental science, chemistry, microbiology, toxicology, or civil, chemical, sanitary or environmental engineering, or equivalent sciences may substitute the training requirement of sixteen (16) hours in the classroom;

(2) **Instructor credit.** An instructor of a DEQ-approved training course may substitute four (4) hours training credit per one (1) hour of instruction. Instructors are required to complete a minimum of four hours of DEQ-approved professional development as a class attendee.

(3) **Publication credit.** Publication of one peer-reviewed technical article related to water or wastewater in journals or magazines generally accepted in the field may be substituted for ten (10) hours training credit; and

(4) **Continuing education unit (CEU).** A CEU is defined as an organized experience in continuing education and training delivered under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction. One CEU is equivalent to 10 contact hours. Therefore, one in-person CEU can be substituted for ten in-person classroom hours, and one online CEU can be substituted for ten online training hours.

(c) **Double substitution not allowed.** Operators cannot utilize their undergraduate degree to substitute for both the experience and training requirements specified in Table 1 of Appendix B. An undergraduate degree can only be used for experience or training hours. Once the operator has indicated this substitution request on their examination application and has provided an official transcript for verification, this decision cannot be reversed at a later date.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 19 Ok Reg 1722, eff 6-13-02; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00]

252:710-3-37. Approved instructor

DEQ may establish special requirements for instructors of approved training courses.

(1) **Standard course.** To be an instructor of a standard course for certification of any type, a person shall have a current operator's license in the State of Oklahoma and at least a C certification in the subject to be taught, as well as one of the following:

(A) score at least 80% on the standard examination and at least an 80% on a subsequent DEQ-proctored examination for the standard course to be taught; or

(B) score at least 80% on the standard examination and at least an 80% on a subsequent DEQ-proctored examination for a level type of certification higher than the course taught.

To change approved instructor status to a higher level, compliance with this subsection is required.

(2) **Fees.** The initial validated examination fee is waived for any certified operator retaking an exam to become an approved instructor. For any subsequent exams, the application fee applies.

(3) **Examination Failure.** An applicant who fails to answer at least 80% of the questions correctly may not take the examination again for thirty (30) days.

(4) **Examination Review.** No instructor will be allowed to review the validated examination during the six-(6) month period prior to taking the examination.

(5) **Instruction.** At least four (4) hours of documented instruction shall be completed each certificate year to maintain approved instructor status. Each person shall retake the examination at least once every four (4) years and obtain a score of 80% or above to retain certification as an approved instructor.

(6) **Professional development training class.** The training class provided by the instructor shall comply with the continuing education requirement found at 252:710-1-7(c) for the certificate year the class is taught.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Amended at 40 Ok Reg 2058, eff 9-15-23; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 22 Ok Reg 1491, eff 6-15-05; Amended at 19 Ok Reg 1722, eff 6-13-02; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00]

252:710-3-38. Reciprocity

(a) **Reciprocity permitted.** DEQ may issue an operator's certification, at an equivalent level of certification, without examination, to applicants who hold valid certifications or licenses issued by any

state which offers reciprocal certification to Oklahoma operators, so long as the other state's program has equivalent requirements for certification.

(b) **Application required.** To obtain a reciprocal certificate in Oklahoma, a person shall complete and submit an application.

(c) **Military Personnel.** Every active duty military personnel and their spouse who holds an equivalent certification in a state other than Oklahoma, upon receiving notice or orders for military transfer or honorable discharge to this state, may in advance of actual transfer or discharge submit a completed application to DEQ for a reciprocal certification. DEQ shall issue the requested certification within thirty (30) days, provided the certification from the other state is found to be valid and reasonably equivalent to the requirements of this Chapter.

(d) **Persons obtaining a reciprocal certificate remain responsible for renewal.** Any person granted reciprocity in Oklahoma will be subject to the same requirements for renewal as any other person certified under these rules.

[Source: Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Revoked at 21 Ok Reg 1645, eff 6-11-04; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

SUBCHAPTER 5. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

252:710-5-51. Waterworks operator

(a) A certified waterworks operator may perform all duties relating to the operation and maintenance of water treatment plants, groundwater systems, storage, and distribution systems, including purchased-water systems and non-transient, non-community systems.

(b) Laboratory work shall be performed under the general supervision of a properly certified laboratory operator.

(c) A designated certified operator shall be available for each operating shift.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-5-52. Wastewater works operator

(a) A certified wastewater works operator may perform all duties relating to the operation and maintenance of wastewater treatment plants, lagoon systems and collection systems.

(b) Laboratory work shall be performed under the general supervision of a properly certified laboratory operator.

(c) A designated certified operator shall be available for each operating shift.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-5-53. Laboratory operator

(a) Except as provided in 252:710-3-31(b)(4), all duties relating to the laboratory analysis of water quality samples from water treatment plants, groundwater systems, storage and distribution systems (including purchased-water systems) shall be performed by or under the general supervision of a laboratory operator certified by DEQ.

(b) Operators of laboratories owned by or associated with waterworks/wastewater works shall record the results of all laboratory analyses for each entry at each facility in a bound volume, database, or other software application. Records shall be kept on file at the laboratory for inspection and review for ten (10) years for waterworks and three (3) years for wastewater works. Each database or other software application used in lieu of a bound volume shall be protected by some form of electronic authorization. All entries shall be date and time stamped and include an audit trail.

(c) Laboratory operator certification is not required for waterworks or wastewater works laboratory operators performing the minimum analyses required by rules of DEQ for purchased water systems, groundwater systems using no treatment other than chlorination for disinfection, or for total retention lagoon facilities unless DEQ has determined that additional laboratory tests, required to be performed by a certified laboratory operator, are necessary for proper operation.

[Source: Amended at 22 Ok Reg 1491, eff 6-15-05; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 40 Ok Reg 2058, eff 9-15-23; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-5-54. Temporary operator

A person holding a temporary certification may perform the duties of a certified operator under the general supervision of an appropriately certified operator.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 23 Ok Reg 1773, eff 6-15-06]

252:710-5-55. Non-certified helpers

An employer shall submit the name and address of each non-certified helper on a registration application with the appropriate fees when each non-certified helper is employed and thereafter by July 1 of each succeeding year the registered helper is in his or her employment. Non-certified helpers may only perform duties under direct supervision.

[Source: Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

252:710-5-56. Individual recordkeeping

Each operator is responsible for keeping their own records of training and experience.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00]

252:710-5-57. Responsibility of owners

Owners of waterworks or wastewater works shall:

- (1) upon request, furnish DEQ with the names, addresses, and positions of all employees;
- (2) advise DEQ in writing within ten (10) days when an operator begins or terminates employment;
- (3) furnish the necessary equipment and materials for adequate maintenance and operation of the treatment plant, laboratory, and supporting facilities;
- (4) give operators a reasonable opportunity to obtain the necessary hours of training for required certification upgrades and renewals; and
- (5) within ten (10) days after contracting with an associated laboratory for the analysis of its water quality samples, notify DEQ in writing about whether:
 - (A) the laboratory is currently certified by DEQ; and
 - (B) the laboratory will only be performing operational testing.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 22 Ok Reg 1491, eff 6-15-05; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00]

252:710-5-58. Distribution and collection operator

A person holding certification as a distribution and collection operator may perform all duties relating to the operation and maintenance of storage and distribution systems, including purchased-water systems and non-transient, non-community systems. A person holding certification as a distribution and collection operator may also perform all duties relating to the operation and maintenance of total retention lagoon systems and collections systems.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Amended at 22 Ok Reg 1491, eff 6-15-05; Added at 21 Ok Reg 1645, eff 6-11-04]

252:710-5-59. Distribution and collection technician

A person holding certification as a distribution and collection technician may perform all duties relating to the operation and maintenance of storage and distribution systems, including purchased-water systems and non-transient, noncommunity systems. A person holding certification as a distribution and collection technician may also perform all duties relating to the operation and maintenance of total retention lagoon

systems and collection systems. All the duties shall be performed under the general supervision of an appropriately certified operator.

[Source: Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25; Amended at 23 Ok Reg 1773, eff 6-15-06; Amended at 22 Ok Reg 1491, eff 6-15-05; Added at 21 Ok Reg 1645, eff 6-11-04]

SUBCHAPTER 7. SHARED OPERATORS FOR SMALL SYSTEMS

252:710-7-1. Purpose

The purpose of this subchapter is to implement the requirements set forth in 59 O.S. § 1118.

[Source: Added at 24 Ok Reg 1556, eff 6-15-07]

252:710-7-2. Requirements

A municipality, sewer improvement district, water or sewer public trust, rural water or sewer district, consortium of small publicly owned water supply or wastewater systems, substate planning district, or the Oklahoma Rural Water Association may hire or contract an operator or operators to provide services for one or more small drinking water or wastewater system(s) if the following requirements are met:

- (1) the operator has a minimum of a Class C certification;
- (2) the operator only provides services to a facility located in the county of his or her residence or place of employment and/or any adjacent county;
- (3) the operator shall be at the Public Water Supply System a minimum of five (5) days per week to ensure proper operation and can only operate three (3) systems for a Public Water Supply System using disinfection;
- (4) the operator shall be at the Public Water Supply or wastewater system a minimum of two (2) days per week to ensure proper operation and can only operate five (5) systems total for a Public Water Supply System not using disinfection or a wastewater system;
- (5) the operator(s) shall operate the small system(s) in compliance with all Federal and State statutory and regulatory requirements; and
- (6) the operator, municipality, sewer improvement district, water or sewer public trust, rural water or sewer district, consortium of small publicly owned water supply or wastewater systems, substate planning district or the Oklahoma Rural Water Association and the small system shall enter into a written agreement, that at a minimum shall:
 - (A) explicitly state the duties of the operator;
 - (B) explicitly state who is responsible for repairs to the Public Water Supply or wastewater system;
 - (C) explicitly state compensation for the operator, including, but not limited to, salary, transportation, insurance, and administration costs; and
 - (D) consider and approve recommendations of the operator for upgrades and/or improvements to the system.

[Source: Amended at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Added at 24 Ok Reg 1556, eff 6-15-07; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

APPENDIX A. Classification of Community and Non-Transient, Non-Community Water Systems, Wastewater Systems, and Laboratories (OAC 252:710-3-33)

Required Classification for Operator	Laboratories	Waterworks	Wastewater Works
Class A	Required for supervision of laboratories using gas chromatography, mass spectrometry, and atomic absorption or similar instrumentation plus requirements for Class B and C.	Required for: (1) Water treatment plants, distribution systems, or chlorinated ground water systems serving populations greater than 50,000; or (2) All water treatment plants classified as an "A" facility by complexity by DEQ.	Required for: (1) Wastewater works and/or collection systems serving populations greater than 50,000; or (2) All wastewater works classified as an "A" facility by complexity by DEQ.
Class B	Required for supervision of bacteriological testing plus requirements for Class C.	Required for: (1) Water treatment plants, distribution systems, or chlorinated groundwater systems serving populations greater than 15,000 and up to and including 50,000; or (2) All water treatment plants classified as a "B" facility by complexity by DEQ.	Required for: (1) Wastewater works and/or collection systems serving populations greater than 15,000 and up to and including 50,000; or (2) All wastewater works classified as a "B" facility by complexity by DEQ.
Class C	Required for supervision of process control testing for: (1) Wastewater: BOD, TSS, pH, Residual Chlorine, COD, DO, Ammonia, Oil and Grease; and/or (2) Water: pH, Residual Chlorine, Turbidity, Alkalinity, Hardness, Stability and Fluoride	Required for: (1) Water treatment plants, distribution systems, and chlorinated or non-chlorinated groundwater systems serving populations greater than 1,500 and up to and including 15,000; (2) Surface water treatment plants serving a population of 15,000 or less; (3) Groundwater systems utilizing any form of chemical treatment other than chlorination for disinfection only; or (4) Water treatment plants classified as a "C" facility by complexity by DEQ.	Required for: (1) Wastewater works and/or collection system facilities serving populations greater than 1,500 and up to and including 15,000; (2) Discharging wastewater facilities serving 15,000 or less; or (3) Wastewater works classified as a "C" facility by complexity by DEQ.
Class D	N/A	Required for distribution systems or chlorinated groundwater systems serving populations of 1,500 or less.	Required for total retention lagoons and/or collection systems serving populations of 1,500 or less.

[Source: Revoked and reenacted at 31 Ok Reg 1343, eff 9-12-14; Revoked and reenacted at 25 Ok Reg 1146, eff 7-1-08; Revoked and reenacted at 24 Ok Reg 1556, eff 6-15-07; Revoked and reenacted at 23 Ok Reg 1773, eff 6-15-06; Revoked and reenacted at 22 Ok Reg 1491, eff 6-15-05; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

APPENDIX B. Certification Requirements (252:710-3-35)

**Table 1. WATERWORKS AND WASTEWATER WORKS OPERATOR
CLASSIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS (252:710-3-35)**

Classification	Licensed Experience	Training¹
Class A Waterworks or Wastewater Works Operator Certification	Five years of waterworks or wastewater works operation including two years of actual hands on operating licensed experience.	200 hours of DEQ approved training, including at least 40 hours of advanced treatment and managerial training or its approved equivalent. ²
Class B Waterworks or Wastewater Works Operator Certification	Three years of waterworks or wastewater works operation including one-year actual hands on operating licensed experience.	100 hours of DEQ approved training or its approved equivalent.
Class C Waterworks or Wastewater Works Operator Certification	One year of waterworks or wastewater works operation.	36 hours of DEQ approved training or its equivalent.
Class C Distribution and Collection Operator Certification	One year of distribution/collection operation.	36 hours of DEQ approved training or its approved equivalent.
Class D Waterworks or Wastewater Works Certification	None	16 hours of DEQ approved training.
Class T Distribution and Collection Technician Certification	None	8 hours of DEQ approved training.
Temporary Operator Certification	None	None
Non-certified Helper³	None	None

¹ Training credit will be granted only for courses or workshops listed as approved by DEQ or for courses, workshops, or alternative activities which have been approved in writing by DEQ in advance.

² Approved equivalents are listed in 252:710-3-36.

³ This classification is not considered a Certification and time worked under this classification does not count towards experience for purpose of acquiring certification.

**Table 2. WATERWORKS OR WASTEWATER WORKS LABORATORY OPERATORS
CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS (252:710-3-35)**

Classification	Licensed Experience	Training⁴
Class A Waterworks or Wastewater Works Laboratory Operator Certification	One year of waterworks or wastewater works laboratory operation; or Three years of waterworks or wastewater works laboratory operation; or Five years of waterworks or wastewater works laboratory operation.	32 hours of DEQ approved Class B training and a Bachelor of Science Degree in chemistry, microbiology, instrumental analysis, or other field of science approved by DEQ; or 32 hours of DEQ approved Class B training and an Associate's Degree in chemistry, microbiology, instrumental analysis, or other field of science approved by DEQ; or 32 hours of DEQ approved Class B training.
Class B Waterworks or Wastewater Works Laboratory Operator Certification	Six months of waterworks or wastewater works laboratory operation.	32 hours of DEQ approved Class B training and 32 hours of DEQ approved Class C training. An Associate's Degree or greater in chemistry, biology, engineering, physical science, hydrology, geology, mathematics, environmental science, microbiology, toxicology, or civil, chemical, sanitary, or environmental engineering may be substituted for the 32 hours of DEQ approved Class C training.
Class C Waterworks or Wastewater Works Laboratory Operator Certification	None.	32 hours of DEQ approved Class C training.

⁴ Training credit will be granted only for courses or workshops listed as approved by DEQ or for courses, workshops, or alternative activities which have been approved in writing by DEQ in advance

[Source: Revoked and reenacted at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Revoked and reenacted at 22 Ok Reg 1491, eff 6-15-05; Revoked and reenacted at 21 Ok Reg 1645, eff 6-11-04; Added at 17 Ok Reg 2024, eff 6-12-00; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]

APPENDIX C. Number of Professional Development Hours (PDHs) Needed Per Certificate Level for Operators and Laboratory Operators

Level of Certification	Total number of PDHs⁵ (hrs/yr)	Classroom PDHs⁶ (hrs/yr)	PDHs from any DEQ approved trainings (hrs/yr)
Class A	16	4 - must be classroom training	12
Class B	12	4 - must be classroom training	8
Class C	8	4 - must be classroom training	4
Class C Distribution and Collection	8	4 - must be classroom training	4
Class D	4	4 - must be classroom training	0
Class T Distribution and Collection Technician	4	4 - must be classroom training	0
Temporary Operator	N/A	N/A	N/A
Non-certified Helper	N/A	N/A	N/A

⁵ PDH hours are based on the highest level of certification held. See 252:710-1-7(c). See 252:710-1-4 for definition of PDH.

⁶ The four (4) hours of classroom training may be a combination of various approved classes attended in person.

[Source: Added at 37 Ok Reg 1319, eff 9-15-20; Amended at 42 Ok Reg, Number 22, effective 9-15-25]