

State Water Resources Control Board

DRINKING WATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Water Treatment and Water Distribution

Renewal and Continuing Education Frequently Asked Questions

How to Renew Your Certificate

Once you have obtained certification, you must renew it every three years. To renew your certification, you must pay the renewal fee and provide proof that you completed the required number of continuing education hours during your renewal period.

Your certificate renewal form and payment are due four months prior to the certificate expiration date. A courtesy renewal reminder is mailed to your address of record approximately two months prior to your due date. **It is your responsibility** to pay the renewal fee and provide information regarding your continuing education on time even if you do not receive the renewal reminder.

Continuing Education

What is continuing education?

Continuing education (as stated in the regulation) are courses, classes or seminars that present "information related to the operation of a drinking water treatment facility and/or distribution system." Continuing education hours can be earned by attending water industry meetings, conferences, workshops, in-house training, college courses, correspondence courses and internet classes.

The course, class, seminar or presentation must be a minimum of 50 minutes long and multiple short classes over different days cannot be added together to equal one contact hour.

How far back in time can I go for contact hours?

All certified operators must complete their continuing education contact hours during their renewal period. Your renewal period starts 3 years prior to the due date listed on your ID card/renewal form and ends at your expiration date.

How many continuing education contact hours do I need to renew my certification?

The number of required contact hours is based upon the grade of certificate held. Continuing education contact hours for certificate renewals are as follows:

Number of Required Contact Hours

Grade D1 =	12 Hours
Grade D2 =	16 Hours
Grade D3 =	24 Hours
Grade D4 =	36 Hours
Grade D5 =	36 Hours

Operators possessing both water distribution and water treatment certificates may apply the same continuing education hours to both certificates provided that the hours were earned within the renewal period for each certificate.

Can I use safety training towards the continuing education requirement?

Yes, operators may submit up to 25% of the required contact hours with safety training. Examples of acceptable safety topics are: confined spaces, slip and fall prevention, electrical safety, etc. In-house safety meetings are acceptable as long as the meeting meets the minimum of 50 minutes.

**Maximum Number of Safety Hours
That May be Submitted**

- Grade D1 = 3 hours
- Grade D2 = 4 hours
- Grade D3 = 6 hours
- Grade D4 = 9 hours
- Grade D5 = 9 hours

How do I prove that I've completed the required number of continuing education contact hours?

Please submit **copies** of the certificates of completion or school transcripts. School transcripts can be official or unofficial. If you send unofficial transcripts, it must show the name of your school and your name on the transcripts.

You may also submit copies of sign-in sheets or your employee training history from your company. For sign-in sheets, they must show the name of the company and have:

- The date
- Name of class
- Duration of class (the minimum for any class is 50 minutes)
- Your printed name and signature
- Name and phone number of safety/training coordinator

For a printed training history, it must be on company letterhead and have:

- Your name
- The date of each class
- Name of each class
- Duration of each class
- Name and phone number of safety/training coordinator
- The signature of the safety/training coordinator

What is a CEU and how does it translate to contact hours?

A CEU stands for Continuing Education Unit. Some continuing education providers use CEUs instead of contact hours on their certificates. One CEU equals 10 contact hours. For example, if a certificate lists a class as 1.6 CEUs, that equals 16 hours. A class that is .3 CEUs is 3 hours.

How many contact hours is a 3 unit college semester course worth?

A three unit college semester course is worth 45 contact hours. For continuing education, you may send an official or unofficial copy of your transcripts. If you send an unofficial copy, please make sure

the transcripts show your name, the name of the college, the name of the class, the semester or date when the class was completed, the number of semester units and your final grade.

What happens if I don't complete the hours by my due date?

Continuing education contact hours are due by your *Expiration Date*. If you cannot complete your hours by that date, you have a grace period up to six months after your Expiration Date to complete them. However, your certification will be EXPIRED during this grace period and you cannot work as a drinking water operator until your certification is renewed.

If your renewal form, fees and contact hours are not submitted within one year of your Expiration Date, your certification cannot be renewed and you will have to take and pass an exam in order to be eligible to be a certified operator again.

Where can I get continuing education?

Please review the list of continuing education providers that we have on our website. You can also access the list by clicking here:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/certlic/occupations/documents/opcert/ce_providers.pdf

There are online, correspondence and classroom courses available. Please remember that these providers may provide classes that are not drinking water-related and are not acceptable for continuing education hours. Please review the list of acceptable technical and safety topics for more information.

If you are unsure if a class is acceptable, please contact the DWOCP Renewal Analyst at 916-449-5615.

I instruct drinking water classes at a local college. Can I receive continuing education hours from these classes?

Yes, you can receive up to 50% of your continuing education hours as an instructor of a drinking water class. As an example, if you are a D3 or T3 operator that requires 24 hours on continuing education hours, you can receive credit up to 12 hours toward your CE requirement. To receive this credit, you must submit a letter from the school that contains the following items:

- On school letterhead
- The name of the instructor (your name)
- Place where the instruction took place (name of school, city and state)
- The title of the class and subject being taught
- Dates or time period when instruction took place. Example- 8 weeks of instruction, every Monday from Jan 10 2016 – Mar 10 2016 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
- If the class is a college course, please state the number of units
- The name, phone number and signature of the HR contact person verifying this information