



State Water Resources Control Board

OFFICE OF OPERATOR CERTIFICATION WASTEWATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, October 20, 2025
1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.

In Person and Via Video and Teleconference
Cal EPA Building – Sierra Hearing Room, 2nd Floor
1001 I St., Sacramento, CA 95814
(Authorized by Government Code section 11133.)

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://waterboards.zoom.us/j/87811544902>
Meeting ID: 878 1154 4902
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Agenda Item	Purpose	Presenter(s)	Estimated Time
Introductions		All	1:00 - 1:15
Agenda Review		Keisha Kelley	
Public Comments*	Any member of the public may address the Wastewater Operator Certification Program Advisory Committee on any matter regarding the Wastewater Operator Certification Program that is not on the agenda.	Public Members	
Office of Enforcement Update	To provide Wastewater Operator Certification Program enforcement related updates.	Tomas Eggers	1:15 - 1:45

E. JOAQUIN ESQUIVEL, CHAIR | ERIC OPPENHEIMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Agenda Item	Purpose	Presenter(s)	Estimated Time
Program Updates	To provide Office of Operator Certification (OOC) updates: 1. Advisory Committee Vacancies 2. OOC Staffing update 3. OOC Program statistics 4. Online application portal 5. Customer service survey 6. Examination Validation	Keisha Kelley	1:45 - 2:30
Regulation Scoping	Present proposed regulatory updates.	Valerie Gregory Keisha Kelley	2:30 – 2:50
Meeting Recap		All	2:50 - 3:00

* Comments will be limited to three minutes per speaker or otherwise at the discretion of State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) staff and the Advisory Committee. Members of the public are encouraged to provide their comments in writing to State Water Board staff and the members of the Advisory Committee.

The following Advisory Committee Members will be participating remotely:

- Kody Tompkins – A person from a statewide organization representing wastewater treatment plant operators and supervisors who are employed in a wastewater treatment plant as an operator or supervisor.
- Hailie Hix – A member of an organized labor union which represents wastewater treatment plant operators.

Wastewater Operator Certification Program
October 20, 2025, Advisory Committee Meeting

Statistics

WASTEWATER		
	2024 1/1/2024-6/30/2024	2025 1/1/2025-6/30/2025
Applications received (exam, cert, renewals)	2,510	1,770
Certificates issued (new and renewals)	1,655	956

NUMBER OF VALID CERTIFICATES						
Grade	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Mar 2025	Apr 2025	May 2025	June 2025
OIT	693	709	704	722	735	742
1	783	792	796	794	798	808
2	1,474	1,469	1,469	1,481	1,482	1,476
3	1,807	1,809	1,815	1,820	1,835	1,840
4	417	420	419	419	418	416
5	1,069	1,078	1,078	1,076	1,076	1,083
Total	6,243	6,277	6,281	6,312	6,344	6,365

Wastewater Operator Certification Program - Statistics
 October 20, 2025, Advisory Committee Meeting

COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PASS/FAIL Reporting Period 1/1/2024- 6/30/2024				
Grade	Examinees	Pass Count	Fail Count	Pass Percent
WW Grade 1	188	103	85	55%
WW Grade 2	202	116	86	57%
WW Grade 3	150	61	89	41%
WW Grade 4	37	10	27	27%
WW Grade 5	79	22	57	28%

COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PASS/FAIL Reporting Period 1/1/2025- 6/30/2025				
Grade	Examinees	Pass Count	Fail Count	Pass Percent
WW Grade 1	203	110	93	54%
WW Grade 2	201	96	105	48%
WW Grade 3	182	69	113	38%
WW Grade 4	39	6	33	15%
WW Grade 5	87	25	62	29%

CUMULATIVE COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PASS/FAIL Reporting Period: 2/20/2021 (CBT Inception) – 6/30/2025				
Grade	Examinees	Pass Count	Fail Count	Pass Percent
WW Grade 1	1,619	876	743	54%
WW Grade 2	1,661	907	754	55%
WW Grade 3	1,524	551	973	36%
WW Grade 4	427	117	310	27%
WW Grade 5	736	210	526	29%

Proposed Regulation Changes

Definitions

- Amend the definitions of “associate’s degree” and “bachelor’s degree” to delete references to accrediting entities that no longer exist and add new accrediting entities, as appropriate
- Replace the definition of “full time” with a definition of “one year of qualifying experience” that would apply to all operators, whether they work full time or part time
- Add a definition of “high school diploma” to require that diplomas be from an accredited high school
- Amend the definition of “science course” to include those courses that currently qualify as “wastewater treatment courses” and delete the separate definition and use of the term “wastewater treatment course” throughout the regulations

Chief Plant Operators (CPOs)

- Add minimum experience requirements to be a CPO
- Consider adding other requirements to ensure CPOs can perform the duties of CPO effectively, such as:
 - Limitations on how many wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) one individual can be CPO over; and
 - Limitations on how far away a CPO may live from a WWTP for which the individual is the CPO

Lone Operator

- Considering amendments to ensure that lone operators are not used as a long-term solution in place of hiring the appropriate grade operator(s) or a contract operator, including:
 - Limiting renewals
 - Amendments to the requirements to be approved to use a lone operator

Operator-In-Training (OIT) Certification

- Delete the requirement for obtaining 6 education points prior to being certified as an OIT
- Amend the amount of time an OIT certificate is valid, from 24 months to 36 months

Operator Certification Requirements

- Update the qualifying experience substitutions to include a maximum for education point substitutions
- Amend the certification requirements so that an operator who holds a current certificate may downgrade to a lower certification even if the operator’s exam results are no longer valid

Examinations

- Amend language to be consistent with the change from paper exams to Computer Based Testing, including:
 - Deleting language regarding final filing dates
 - Deleting the requirement to wait 60-days to re-take exams
 - Amending the deadline for resolving application deficiencies, which currently is tied to the next filing date
 - Making conforming changes to examination security

Operator Certificate Renewals

- Prohibit renewal applications from being submitted more than 180 days prior to expiration of a certificate

Disciplinary Action

- Add downgrade of a certificate to the list of possible disciplinary actions
- Delete the special retention policy for notices to the State Water Board of discipline action taken by WWTP owners and contract operators against operators, OITs, provisional operators, and contract operators.

Minor Additional Changes

- Change references from the California Department of Public Health to the State Water Board
- Incorporate statutory amendments to the Advisory Committee positions
- Delete obsolete references and provisions, including section 3680.1, which provided time for privately owned WWTPs to comply with the Operator Certification Regulations
- Considering amending deadlines for resolving deficiencies on applications throughout the regulations for consistency across the program