

Operator Certification Bulletin

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Operator Workforce Matching Portal

Job search tool

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry launched the Operator Workforce Matching Portal to help connect system owners seeking staffing resources with certified and licenced operators who are available for employment. The Ministry continues to offer this service free of charge.

The way the Portal works is simple. When a system owner searches the portal for operators, they receive a list of profiles of operators registered in the system that fit their criteria. From there, they can reach out to registered operators with potential employment opportunities.

Operators who register with the Portal can provide contact information, availability, the type of certificate(s) and licence(s) held, and their operator ID number. After this information has been verified by the Ontario Water Wastewater Certification Office (OWWCO), an operator profile will be searchable by system owners, including an operator's current employer.

The Portal is designed to help system owners find available operators based on their credentials, availability and location based on their search criteria, so it is important for operators to keep their information up to date.

Registered operators can change their profile to indicate the days of the week they can work, whether they can work days, nights, or both, and where they are available to work.



To register for the Portal, go to:

<https://owmp.ene.gov.on.ca>

For more detailed instructions on how to use the Portal, visit OWWCO's website:

<https://owwco.ca/operator-workforce-matching-portal/>



Maintenancefest Supports Drinking Water System Operators

For more information about WCWC training opportunities across Ontario, please visit

www.wcwc.ca

➤➤➤ After a three-year hiatus, the Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC) was pleased to bring back one of its most popular training events, Maintenancefest.

Maintenancefest is a unique training opportunity that is particularly valuable because of the hands-on experience it provides for drinking water system operators. This year, more than 80 participants attended the event in Walkerton, Ontario on August 29 and 30.

Participants cycled through six training modules of their choice, earning 1.2 Continuing Education Units over the course of two days. Modules included:

- Jar Testing Lab
- Pressure Control Valves
- Recordkeeping Requirements
- Unidirectional Flushing
- Backflow & Cross Connection
- Basics of Utility Locates
- Chemical Dosing Equipment
- Hydrostatic Pressure Testing



“So glad to have been part of this Maintenancefest. Very well presented and organized.”

»»» Did you know...?

Online Employer-site Operator-in-Training certification exams

Online employer-site Operator-in-Training (OIT) certification exams are offered throughout the province. Online employer-site OIT exams allow owners and operating authorities of municipal and First Nation drinking water and wastewater systems to schedule and hold OIT exams at their workplace.

The exam is held on-site with an in-person, employer-provided proctor, and overseen remotely by a virtual (OWWCO) proctor.

Site Requirements

Employers must provide examinees the following equipment:

- A work computer or laptop for each examinee and for the on-site proctor. Personal computers are not permitted.
- A webcam or proctor laptop with an integrated webcam to provide the virtual (OWWCO) proctor a complete view of the examination room, the on-site proctor, the examinees and their workspaces for the entire duration of the exam.

The exam room set up is subject to approval by OWWCO. The exam rooms:

- must have tables or a workspace large enough to accommodate a computer and provide writing space.
- must have internet access.
- must have enough space to allow examinees to be seated at least 2 meters apart.
- should be situated in a place of business that is secure, quiet and away from distractions.

Fees

»»» For examinees

Examinees pay the regular exam fee (\$50) when they submit their exam registration application.

»»» For employers

Employers are responsible for sourcing an appropriate site (see ;left) and must pay an administrative charge of \$300 to OWWCO for each session.

This fee covers costs for vetting and training new on-site proctors, testing the technology, assessing the test environment and virtual proctoring (by OWWCO).

If an exam is invigilated by an on-site proctor already trained by OWWCO (in the past 12 months) and proctor training is not required, the cost decreases to \$250.

If you are an employer looking to schedule an on-site exam, we invite you to read OWWCO's FAQ at <https://owwco.ca/employer-site-operator-in-training-certification-exams-faqs/>

Walkerton Clean Water Centre's (WCWC)

Online Resource Library

➤➤➤ If you are looking for reliable information on drinking water go to:
<https://wcwc.ca/services/drinkingwaterresourcelibrary/>

The Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC) maintains an online Drinking Water Resource Library to improve access to information for drinking water professionals.

The Drinking Water Resource Library contains thousands of resources related to drinking water treatment, safety, best practices and emerging and common issues found in Ontario, all vetted by WCWC staff.

WCWC has curated groups for the most popular searches, making it easier to browse for information. Some of these topics include regulatory guidance, cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), arsenic, lead, legionella and microplastics.

How-To Videos

WCWC also produces how-to videos for those new to the field. To find step-by-step videos, click on the link on the library's landing page. Or, visit the YouTube channel www.youtube.com/@walkertoncleanwatercentre.

Access fact sheets, videos, templates, industry standards, study guides, and practice problems, presentations, WCWC course resources and WCWC pilot testing resources free of charge at www.DrinkingWaterResourceLibrary.ca and leave the searching to us.



Suggestions for content?

Contact the library by email at dwrl@wcwc.ca

»»» What's Coming

New eForms

The Ministry is in the process of upgrading and replacing its forms to make it easier to access and pay for services.

The new forms, 'eForms', will allow the application process to be faster, more efficient, and paperless.

»»» Payment made with either a Mastercard or Visa credit or debit card will be processed automatically once the completed form is submitted.

Easy to use

The new eForms process will allow you to complete forms from within your browser or via an electronically-fillable PDF.

- For simple applications, the browser-based version is quick and convenient, allowing you to access services from your home computer or your mobile device.
- Longer applications that may require input from supervisors or managers can be completed using the PDF version of the form.
 - This format can be sent to different people by email and allows you to get the signatures you may need from different parties, and then finish completing and submitting the form.

Each of the eForm options allow you to attach electronic copies of supporting documents to your application.

Need help getting familiar?

The Change of Address and W/WOCS Access Request forms have already been released in the new formats and are accessible through OWWCO's website:

<https://owwco.ca/forms-and-guidelines/>. The remainder of the forms will be rolled out in the coming months, so be sure to check the OWWCO website for announcements and updates.

To support this transition, the OWWCO website, <https://owwco.ca/>, will have resources, such as FAQs and walk-throughs, to help you use the new forms.

WWOCS Modernization

In November 2022, the Ministry began exploring modernization of the current Water Wastewater Operator Certification System (WWOCS) to enhance delivery of certification program services.

The Ministry invited operators, system owner and operating authority representatives and training providers to participate in hour-length interviews to understand their experience of how the services are delivered currently and their expectations for a modern service delivery model.



A total of thirty individuals were interviewed. According to the study, the key expectations for modernization were:

- Operator's ability to submit and pay for their applications online.
- Operator's ability to track and manage their certification information on an ongoing basis (add experience, training, etc.).
- Improved application functionality such as error checking and automatically inserting information from their profile.
- Improved course list.

The Ministry is currently working to identify options for meeting the needs and expectations identified in these interviews. Further engagement is ongoing with operators, system owner and operating authority representatives and training providers to help test and refine system prototypes.



»»» Did you know...?

Code of Ethics for Operators

It is important for operators and water quality analysts to maintain integrity in their work. That is why acting honestly, competently and with integrity with a view to protecting public health and the environment is required under the regulation for the certification of drinking water system operators and water quality analysts (O. Reg. 128/04, <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/040128>), and the regulation for the Licensing of Sewage Works Operators (O. Reg. 129/04, <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/040129>).

In order to ensure ethical conduct, the ministry is authorized to take disciplinary action if an operator or water quality analyst has failed to meet these requirements, and to maintain the integrity of the operator certification program.

Requirements under provincial law

As set out in the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002, the people of Ontario are entitled to expect their drinking water to be safe.

According to O. Reg. 128/04 and the Drinking Water Systems Regulation (O. Reg. 170/03) made under the Safe Drinking Water Act, and O. Reg. 129/04 made under the Ontario Water Resources Act, operators are expected to:

- exercise care, diligence and skill in respect of the operations and maintenance of drinking water systems.
- act honestly, competently and with integrity, with a view to ensuring the protection and safety of the users of drinking water systems.
- hold a valid operator certificate appropriate to their role and the type of regulated drinking water subsystem(s) or wastewater facility(ies) in which they operate.

To further this goal, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks newly launched the Drinking Water Operator Code of Ethics to provide the foundation for ethical drinking water operational practices.

Ethical work practices

The Code of Ethics for Drinking Water Operators, which can be found on the Ministry's site, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/drinking-water-operations-training-and-certification>, consists of two parts, operator requirements under provincial law and ethical work practices, which are included in abbreviated form below.

If you hold a drinking water operator or water quality analyst certificate, or are applying for a certificate to work within a drinking water system in Ontario, be ready to acknowledge and attest to the following:

- operate with professionalism, respect, and honesty and exercise care and diligence to help ensure the delivery of safe and reliable drinking water to the citizens of Ontario whom I serve.
- strive to fully meet and/or exceed the public's and my employer's expectations for excellent service
- uphold the drinking water operator profession to the best of my abilities by conducting myself with integrity.
- perform operational work with the degree of skill and competency that is required by the type and classification of my drinking water certification(s).
- diligently maintain logs and records that are legible, accurate and that reflect the regulatory work I have conducted, so they can be relied upon by other operators, employers, regulators, and others as circumstances may warrant.
- seek guidance and information from the Overall Responsible Operator or Operator-in-Charge, as applicable, when needed to help ensure the best course of action.
- comply with legislation, regulations, related guidance material, standard operating procedures, directives and any other code(s) of conduct or policies required by law or by my employer, to help ensure effective operations.
- hold a valid and appropriate operator certificate when performing operational duties that are required by law to be performed by a certified operator.
- make available to the owner or operating authority of the subsystem where I work a valid certificate of qualification so that it can be conspicuously displayed at my workplace or at the premises from which the subsystem is managed.

continued on next page >>>



Ethical work practices, cont'd

- interact with peers, apprentices, tradespeople, members of other professions or occupations, and all other persons I encounter in my place of work in a manner that:
 - demonstrates courtesy, honesty, integrity, good faith, and respect.
 - is professional and civil.
 - shares my knowledge with other operators.
 - abstains from acts of discrimination and harassment.
 - avoids any abusive behavior towards any individual.
- satisfy my duties related to training, including by:
 - seeking training to improve my knowledge and competency in operations.
 - making efforts to learn about emerging issues and technologies.
 - completing any required training to support my certification and recertification.
 - following approved workplace training requirements
- satisfy my duty to act lawfully, including by:
 - complying with all legislation relevant to my employment as a drinking water operator, the supervision of others, and the drinking water subsystem within which I may operate.
 - not accepting gratuities.
- maintain a professional relationship with the Certification Program Administrator, the Ontario Water Wastewater Certification Office and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, including by:
 - being honest when completing and submitting any application form, information or documents to support the assessment of my application(s), evaluation(s), or examination process(es).
 - responding to any communications promptly, completely, and in the form requested.
 - cooperating with the Certification Program Administrator as circumstances dictate.



Ministry Workforce Surveys

Thank you for your response to the Ministry's survey of OITs, drinking water or wastewater operators, and employers.

In early October 2023, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks launched three surveys to the drinking water and wastewater operators, Operators-in-Training (OITs), and their employers.

The surveys gave members of the regulated community of drinking water and wastewater operators an opportunity to be heard. Thank you to those who participated!

The Ministry will analyse survey results to gain insights from the regulated community to help understand the current state of the water and wastewater operator workforce, such as motivations and barriers impacting the profession.

The findings will help the Ministry identify actions that may be needed to ensure that Ontario has a strong and sustainable workforce for the water and wastewater sector.

A Fresh Look

OWWCO's Upcoming Website Refresh

We're excited to announce the refresh to OWWCO's website, <https://owwco.ca>, which went live on December 2023. The updates to the website are informed by the insights and feedback provided by operators and stakeholders on past surveys. Notable features include optimization for mobile phone browsers for better access on-the-go, improved accessibility, and streamlined navigation to help you find needed information faster.

Alongside a fresh, professional design, minor content updates have also been made to enhance your experience.

»» Industry Events

Connect with the community in Ontario and in person

| Event | Host | Date | Location |
|---|---------------|------------------|---|
| 2024 Ontario Water For The Future Conference And Trade Show | OWWA/ WEAO | May 5-7 2024 | Niagara Falls Convention Centre 6815 Stanley Avenue, Niagara Falls, ON |
| International Conference on Water Resources Sustainable Development ICWRSD | WASET | Sept 20-21, 2024 | Toronto, ON |
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LEGEND

OWWA: Ontario Water Works Association

WASET: World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology

WEAO: Water Environment Association of Ontario

The Operator Certification Bulletin is a publication of the Certification and Licensing Programs Office, Environmental Policy Division, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

<http://www.ontario.ca/Environment>

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