



Water Operator Certification Program

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Pjila'si!

Nova Scotia's operator certification program dates back to 1984, when it was a voluntary program. Operator certification became mandatory in 1996 and further requirements and guidance were introduced in 2005, including the need to renew certificates.

The requirements for persons operating classified water and wastewater facilities in Nova Scotia are described in the [Water and Wastewater Facilities and Public Drinking Water Supplies Regulations](#).

AFNWA has a compendium that closely mirrors these Nova Scotia requirements

The operator certification program is required to ensure that operators have the necessary training and experience to operate a system for the protection of human health and the environment.

The benefits of a certification program include:

- Measure of competency
- Meets a national standard
- Provides some assurance of public safety
- Employee pride and recognition
- Reciprocity (ability to move between Provinces)

What is the definition of an Operator?

The regulations state an "operator" means a person who directs, adjusts, inspects, tests or evaluates an operation or a process that controls the effectiveness or efficiency of a facility.

Certification categories:

An operator can become certified in the following categories of facilities in Nova Scotia:

Water Treatment

Water Distribution

Wastewater Collection

Wastewater Treatment

Operator Certification Corequisites

	Class	Acceptable Operating Experience	Education	Post-Secondary Education
OIT	-	-	Grade 12, GED or equivalent	-
Class I	OIT	1 year at Class I or higher facility	Grade 12, GED or equivalent	-
Class II	I	3 years at Class I or higher facility	Grade 12, GED or equivalent	-
Class III	II	4 years at a Class II or higher facility, including 2 years of DRC	Grade 12, GED or equivalent	2 years or 90 CEUs of acceptable education or training
Class IV	III	4 years at a Class III or higher facility, including 2 years of DRC	Grade 12, GED or equivalent	4 years or 180 CEUs of acceptable education or training

What if an operator is short on experience or education?

- Substitutions are available.
- Applications for certification must clearly indicate that substitutions are being requested and outline what substitutions are being used.
- Failure to do so may result in an application being rejected as incomplete

Education or training	May be substituted for	Limit
1 year of post secondary	1 year of operating or DRC experience (Class II, III, and IV only)	Up to 50% of required experience
45 CEUs of specialized operator training	1 year of operating or DRC experience (Class II, III, and IV only)	Up to 50% of required experience

Substitutions Con't

Experience	May be substituted for	Limit
1 year of operating or DRC experience	2 years of education (Grade 1 to 8)	None
1 year of operating or DRC experience	1 year of education (Grade 9 to 12)	None
For Class III, 1 year of DRC (only) experience in Class II or higher	1 year of post secondary	1 year
For Class IV, 1 year of DRC (only) experience in Class III or higher	1 year of post secondary	2 year
45 CEUs of specialized operator training	1 year of post secondary	None

Examinations

Exams are provided through the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC). AFNWA's program mirrors Nova Scotia's facility classification and operator certification program which was created based upon the model provided by the ABC.

To accompany the standardized exams, ABC has developed "Need-to-Know Criteria" for operators to use as guidance when preparing for exams. It is recommended that Nova Scotia operators refer to the latest version of these which can be found at the end of this presentation under reference links.

All resource material will be provided with the exam. Operators are allowed to write up to a maximum of 8 months prior to meeting the experience qualifications, however should the operator pass the exam the certificate will be held until all requirements are met and documented. This option allows operators to take advantage of exam sessions near their community.

Certificate Renewal

- All operator certificates in Nova Scotia have an expiry date. An operator must obtain continuing education to renew their certificate before it expires.
- A completed renewal form, complete with payment of a renewal fee, must be submitted at least 60 days before the date the certificate expires.
- Operator in Training certificates are not renewable.

The requirements for renewing an operator certificate

	Requirements
Class I, II	2.4 CEU over previous 4 years
Class III, IV	4.8 CEU over previous 4 years
Overall DRC, regardless of class	4.8 CEU over previous 4 years

Each certificate must be renewed and CEUs must be achieved for each certificate. CEUs can be applied to multiple certificates if they are applicable to the category of certificate and meet the requirements for an acceptable CEU.

Fees

- **Operator-in-Training Exams**

- Online exams are available for operators in training.

- To apply, complete the [application](#). You'll receive an email to confirm your application is complete, and you'll be sent a link to complete the test. There is a \$27.50 fee to take the exam.

- You'll get an invoice once you've applied.

- **Exam Fees**

- Operator-in-Training Exam: \$27.25*
- Certification Exam (Level I-IV): \$100.00*
*no tax is charged

- **Renewal**

- \$61.15* for each certificate.
*no tax is charged

- When attending an exam session an examinee must:

- Present their letter of eligibility.

- Present a picture ID.

- Provide their own calculator and one or two soft lead pencils.

- Provide payment. Cash or credit cards NOT accepted. Cheques or Money Orders can be made payable to the Nova Scotia Minister of Finance.



AFNWA Progression



Operator Salary is determined by certification level. All Salaries are subject to CPI increases annually in April of each year, based on previous Calendar year.

Certifications	Fiscal 2022/2023	Fiscal 2023/2024
OIT	46,247	49,392
Level 1 - 1 Certificate	47,692	50,935
Level 1 - 2 Certificate	49,137	52,478
Level 1 - 3 Certificate	50,582	54,022
Level 1 - 4 Certificate	52,027	55,565
Level 2 - 1 Certificate	53,472	57,108
Level 2 - 2 Certificate	54,917	58,651
Level 2 - 3 Certificate	56,362	60,195
Level 2 - 4 Certificate	57,807	61,738

Links/Resources

- Requirements for persons operating classified water and wastewater facilities in Nova Scotia:
<https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regs/envwaste.htm>
- <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/docs/OperatorInTrainingBrochure.pdf>
- [Examinations | Water: Operator Certification \(novascotia.ca\)](#)
- [ACWWA - ACWWA Courses](#)
- <https://novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety/courses.asp>
- <https://skillsonlinens.bluedrop.io/storefront/skillsonlinens>
- <https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/docs/Certification.Pre-Approved.Courses.for.Certification.Renewal.CEUs.pdf>
- [Ace Your WPI Standardized Exams with our Need-to-Know Criteria \(gowpi.org\)](#)
- <https://www.owp.csus.edu/courses/online-courses.php>
- <https://www.ocwa.com/what-we-do/training>

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