



**MAINE WASTEWATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
C/O NEIW PCC SOUTH PORTLAND**

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Frequently Asked Questions

Wastewater Operator Certification

1. How do I upgrade my Grade 1 certificate to a Grade 2?

If you passed a Biological 1 exam, you may upgrade your certification to a Grade 2 after you have completed one year of wastewater experience or a combination of four years of related worked experience and education. Your immediate supervisor must complete an Upgrade Request Form verifying you have completed the work experience and/or education requirements and paying \$125 fee.

2. I passed a Provisional exam. How do I upgrade my certificate?

If your current certification is active, you may upgrade up to the provisional certification grade. Your immediate supervisor must complete an Upgrade Request Form and submit documentation verifying you have completed the work experience and/or education requirement for the requested upgraded certification and pay \$125 for each upgrade request. You must apply for the upgrade within 6 years of passing the provisional exam or the provisional certification will expire.

3. How do I renew my certificate?

Each Maine Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator certificate must be renewed every 2 years. March 1 is always the renewal deadline by which operators must pay their renewal fee and show proof they completed 18 clock hours of approved training during the previous two-year certificate period. (Example: March 1, 2024 – February 28, 2026)

- If your operator number ends with an odd digit, you are due to renew in odd numbered years.
- If your operator number ends with an even digit, you are due to renew in even numbered years.

Certified wastewater operators must obtain eighteen (18*) Training Contact Hours (TCHs) of DEP-approved wastewater continuing education training during each biennial (two-year) renewal period and provide documentation of completed TCHs to renew their certification.

*Note: A certificate holder with a Grade 1 Spray Irrigation Treatment System Operator Certificate (SITS-1) is required to obtain at least 6 operational clock hours of training during their previous 2-year certificate period.

4. What is DEP's policy on eligible Training Contact Hours?

Training must be relevant to the operation, maintenance, safety, or management of a wastewater treatment plant. Training must be presented by established providers including government agencies, professional associations, technical schools, colleges/universities, and private instructors through classes, workshops, conferences, webinars, and in-house sessions.

- All training must be at least one-hour in length. Shorter classes can be bundled to meet the 1-hour requirement.
- The same course (excluding safety) cannot be used for successive renewal cycles.
- Multi-month training is credited for the renewal period in which the course ended.
- You can only use TCHs earned in your renewal period.
- Classes taken in January and February of your renewal year always count toward the renewal period that precedes your March 1 renewal start date.
- Excess TCHs cannot be carried over into the next renewal cycle.

5. What is the policy on safety or management training hours?

To maintain your certification, you must complete 18 hours of DEP approved training during your renewal period. Of the required 18 hours, a maximum of 6 safety and/or management hours is allowed towards your approved training. The combination of Safety and Management TCHs shall not exceed six hours for the 2-year biennial renewal cycle.

Acceptable management training topics include planning, organizing, staffing, communication, conducting meetings, and public relations. Human Resources (HR), workplace policy, and general office training are not accepted for Management TCHs.

Approved safety training must be directly related to the day-to-day operations of a wastewater treatment plant. Safety topics in 29 CFR 19210 General Industry Standards and 29 CFR 1926 Construction Industry Standards are acceptable.

6. How can I ensure accuracy with my Wastewater Operator continuing education record in Maine?

The summary list you receive in October prior to your renewal year will only contain information that has been sent to the Maine Wastewater Operator Certification Program.

If you currently hold an active Maine Wastewater Operator Certificate, you may view a summary of the Training Contact Hours by visiting <http://www.neiwppcc.org/maine/renewals>. This report is updated on the first business day of the month.

Submitting proof of training with your operator number is the most efficient way for us to record the continuing education you have completed. While some training providers regularly send us summary lists or sign-in sheets from classes they have held, some do not. At any time, you may send us a copy of your certificate of completion to make sure it is recorded for you. You should always keep the original training certificate you receive for your own records.

7. How do I know if a class is approved for continuing education as a Maine Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator?

Many of the Maine based training organizations such as NEIWPC, JETCC, NEWEA, Maine Rural Water Association, Maine Water Environment Association, and Maine Water Utilities Association obtain pre-approval for applicable topics prior to publicizing their classes. A list of pre-approved webinars and on-demand training can be found by visiting www.neiwppcc.org/maine/wastewater-certification. If there is any question about a course's applicability for Wastewater Operator Certification you should inquire with NEIWPC's South Portland office or Maine DEP.

8. How do I obtain approval for a training class that I am interested in or have taken?

Maine DEP must approve all classes for continuing education for Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators. To obtain approval, you need to complete a TCH Request Form and submit it with a training brochure and instructor credentials directly to NEIWPC's South Portland office and we will submit it to Maine DEP for you. Download the application at www.neiwppcc.org/maine/wastewater-certification/forms-library.

9. What happens to my certification if I fail to pay my renewal fee or do not have the required training hours by March 1st of my renewal year?

Effective midnight on March 1st, your certification will become Inactive. Inactive operators cannot be the person who has direct responsibility for the operation of any wastewater treatment plant as stated in 32 MRSA §4171 (3) and cannot legally sign the Discharge Monitoring Report for any wastewater treatment facility. For your certification to be reactivated, you will be required to pay a \$100 Reactivation Fee in addition to your renewal fee.

10. If my certification is currently Inactive, what do I need to do to reactivate it?

If your certification is inactive for less than 6 months, your certification can be reactivated if you pay all appropriate fees and show proof of completion of 18 training contact hours.

If your certification has been Inactive for more than 6 months but less than 2 years, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection may require you to retake the Wastewater Operator Certification exam. An Inactive operator who wishes to reactive their certification after the 6-month grace period but before 2 years must pay the following required fees:

- Pay the renewal fee (\$125)
- Pay the reactivation fee (\$100)
- Pay fees associated with the exam
 - CBT Application Fee (\$125)
 - CBT exam administrator fee (payable to PSI per attempt)
 - Paper exam fee for Spray Irrigation Treatment exam (\$125 per attempt)

If your certification has been Inactive for 2 years, you will be removed from the list of certified wastewater operators and you will be required to retake the Wastewater Operator Certification exam if you want to be certified again.

11. What if I move or change jobs?

You must notify the Maine Wastewater Operator Certification Program if your contact information (address, phone #, email, current employer) on record changes. Failure to notify the program could result in failure to receive important information regarding your Wastewater Operator's Certificate. Operator Change Form is available online at www.neiwppcc.org/maine/wastewater-certification/forms-library.

If you have questions or comments, please contact the NEIWPC South Portland office at:
(207) 253-8020 or maine@neiwppcc.org