

State of Hawaii
Public Water System Operator Certification
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Certification Requirements Questions

Q1. How can I become certified?

A. An applicant must first acquire the minimum education and work experience. A certification application, application fee, examination registration form, and examination fee must then be submitted. The Board of Certification of Public Water System Operators will evaluate the application. If all requirements are met, the Board will approve the applicant to sit for the examination. If the applicant passes the examination, he/she will be issued a certificate.

Q2. What are the minimum education requirements?

A. The minimum educational requirement for certified WTPOs and DSOs for all grades is a high school degree, a general equivalency diploma (GED), or the equivalent of a GED. For DSOs only, an eighth grade education plus four years of work experience can be considered to be the equivalent of a GED. Work experience is defined as experience in operating a water treatment plant (for WTPOs) or a distribution system (for DSOs). Work experience that is used to meet the GED requirement shall not also be used to meet the work experience requirement beyond the GED.

Q3. What are the minimum work experience requirements?

A. The work experience requirements in years for the level of education are summarized as follows:

| Degree | Grade | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|---|----|----|----|
| | OIT | 1 | 2a | 3b | 4c |
| High School or GED | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Qualifying Associate Degree | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Qualifying Bachelor's Degree | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

- a. For the WTPO Grade 2 certification, the years of experience must include at least one year of work experience at a Class 2 or higher WTP.
- b. For the WTPO Grade 3 certification, the years of experience must include at least one year of full-time experience at a membrane filtration, Class 3, or 4 WTP, and at least one month of work experience at a Class 3 or 4 WTP.
- c. For the WTPO Grade 4 certification, the years of experience must include at least one year of full-time experience at a membrane filtration, Class 3, or 4 WTP, and at least one year of full-time experience at a Class 3 or 4 WTP.

Q4. Where can I get a certification application?

A. The certification application is available to download on the Safe Drinking Water Branch website.
<http://health.hawaii.gov/sdwb/operatorcert/>

Q5. When are applications due?

A. Applications for regular certification with examination are due three months prior to the exam date. A listing of exam dates can be found on the Safe Drinking Water Branch website.
<http://health.hawaii.gov/sdwb/operatorcert/>

Q6. How much does it cost to apply?

A. The certification application fee is \$30. The examination fee is \$70. Payment should be in the form of money order or cashier's check made out to the State of Hawaii.

Q7. When will I know if my application has been approved or not?

A. The Board shall notify the applicant of its decision a minimum of forty-five days before the examination date.

Q8. How can I qualify for WTPO certification if I need the experience to become certified but I need to be certified to get the experience?

A. There are two ways to qualify for WTPO certification.

- (1) If an applicant could qualify as a DSO with one year of experience, then as a DSO he/she could run disinfection treatment. With one year of disinfection experience, he/she could qualify for WTPO certification.
- (2) An applicant could apply for an OIT certificate which does not require any experience. With that OIT, he/she could operate treatment with the certified operator standing right next to him to gain the necessary experience to qualify for WTPO certification.