

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

General Questions

Q1. Where can I find the operator certification rules?

- A. The Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 11 Chapter 25, Rules Relating to Certification of Public Water System Operators are available to download on the Safe Drinking Water Branch website.
<http://health.hawaii.gov/sdwb/operatorcert/>

Q2. Who must be certified?

- A. Each public water system in Hawaii, except for transient, non-community public water systems, shall be under the responsible charge of an operator(s) holding a valid certification equal to or greater than the classification of the water treatment plant and/or distribution system. All operating personnel making daily process control or system integrity decisions about water quality or quantity that affect public health shall be certified. In addition, a designated certified operator shall be available for each operating shift.

Q3. What are the classifications of Water Treatment Plants?

- A. Water Treatment Plant Classification
- Class 1 - Slow sand filtration; chemical addition, such as for chlorination, fluoridation, pH control, or corrosion control; granular activated carbon filtration; packed aeration towers or air stripping towers; ion exchange*, and UV**
 - Class 2 - Membrane filtration; cartridge filtration; or desalting (including distillation, electrodialysis, and reverse osmosis)
 - Class 3 - Diatomaceous earth filtration; or package plants with diatomaceous earth filtration
 - Class 4 - Conventional treatment; direct filtration; or package treatment plants with conventional treatment or direct filtration.

* The Board of Certification of Public Water System Operators decided ion exchange will be considered a Class 1 treatment plant at the May 24, 2016 Board Meeting.

** The Board of Certification of Public Water System Operators decided UV treatment will be considered a Class 1 treatment plant at the September 3, 2020 Board Meeting.

Q4. What are the classifications of Distribution Systems?

- A. Distribution System Classification:
- Class 1 - Serves water systems with a population of 1,500 or less persons
 - Class 2 - Serves water systems with a population of 1,501 to 15,000 persons
 - Class 3 - Serves water systems with a population of 15,001 to 50,000 persons
 - Class 4 - Serves water systems with a population of over 50,000 persons