

**Training and Continuing Education
Reference Guide for
Idaho Water and Wastewater Operators**

**Idaho Board of Drinking Water and
Wastewater Professionals**

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Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses

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Training and Continuing Education Reference Guide For Idaho Water and Wastewater Operators

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Section 1: Operator Training Requirements

Every licensed drinking water operator and every licensed wastewater operator is required to obtain continuing education during each licensure cycle. This section describes the general continuing education requirements, from which continuing education units (CEUs) are earned.

1.1 General Training Requirements

Continuing education units may be earned from taking approved training classes. Proof that a minimum number and type of CEUs, were earned during the licensure cycle allows renewal of an operator's license or licenses at the end of each cycle. Failure to earn a minimum number of approved CEUs or to submit documentation of earned CEUs, when required by an IBOL audit, potentially results in an operator's license not being renewed and therefore becoming invalid. An operator must hold a valid license to make decisions about the water system. An operator who is designated as the responsible charge or substitute responsible charge operator must hold a valid license.

Rules of the Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals (IDAPA 24.05.01) require drinking water and wastewater operators to become licensed, and specify the requirements operators must meet to maintain a valid license.

1.2 Continuing Education Units

The training that licensed operators are required to obtain is measured in CEUs. This section has information about how many CEUs are assigned for each training and the different types of CEUs.

1.2.1 How CEUs Are Calculated

One continuing education unit equals 10 contact hours of participation in a class with approved subject matter and qualified instruction. Continuing education units are assigned at the rate of one-tenth (0.1) CEU for each hour of class contact time. Non

technical or non subject matter related issues such as breaks, lunch, class introductions, membership drives, professional affiliate promotional meetings, Board or officer meetings are not topics for which CEUs can be awarded. Depending on how many breaks are scheduled, and whether student introductions, membership drives, officer meetings, or other non-related items are on the agenda, you may attend a class from 8:00 am through 5:00 PM and only earn 0.6 or 0.7 CEUs.

These standards for assigning CEUs are based on the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET) criteria for CEU assignment, which Idaho has followed for almost two decades. IACET uses the continuing education unit or CEU as a form of measurement to document participation in short courses, workshops, academic classes, or professional and vocational programs.

CEUs cannot be awarded for classes in which radio, TV, or video is used as the sole instructor. Likewise, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, work experience, and individual self-directed studies do not qualify for CEUs unless they are part of an otherwise qualified program.

1.2.2 Three Different Types of CEUs

There are three different types of CEU designations assigned to training for water and wastewater operators:

- ◆ *water* CEUs,
- ◆ *wastewater* CEUs, or
- ◆ *water/wastewater (dual)* CEUs.

1.2.3 Significance of CEU Type

The drinking water and wastewater operator licensure rules do not allow CEUs earned for training specific to drinking water to be used for renewal of a wastewater operator license; likewise, the wastewater operator licensure rules do not allow CEUs earned for training specific to wastewater to be used toward the renewal of a water operator license. Training classes that qualify for both the water and the wastewater designation are eligible for either water or wastewater license renewal and as such may be considered "dual CEUs." A water operator may earn water or water/wastewater CEUs and use them for the continuing education requirement for license renewal. A wastewater operator may earn wastewater or water/wastewater CEUs and use them for the continuing education requirement for license renewal.

1.3 Training Requirements for Licensed Operators

This section provides specific information about the training required for drinking water operators and wastewater operators.

1.3.1 Training Requirements for Drinking Water and Wastewater Operators

The drinking water operator and wastewater operator licensure rule requires operators to meet the following training conditions:

- 1) 1) Renew licenses **annually**, on the operator's birthday in accordance to the Rules for Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals (IDAPA 24.05.01). Earn 0.6 CEUs annually according to Rules for Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals (IDAPA 24.05.01).
- 2)
- 3) Earn the required number of CEUs to qualify toward the renewal of a license.
- 4) Complete the training required to satisfy the renewal requirement for one water license if you hold more than one water license and one wastewater license if you hold more than one wastewater license.
- 5) Earn the required number of CEUs of training that has been approved by the () IBOL CE Coordinator as being relevant to operating a public water or a public wastewater systems.
- 6) Submit a hard copy or electronic copy of an IBOL License Renewal Form annually prior to operator's birthday. The operator will verify having met the continuing education requirements as part of the license renewal requirements.

1.4 Keeping Track of CEUs for the Individual Operator

Each operator is responsible for keeping the CEU certificates issued to him/her by each training provider. Maintain a file with all original CEU certificates.. Only submit copies of CEU Certificates if audited by IBOL. Otherwise do not send copies of CEU certificates with the annual license renewal form and fcc. A maximum of six (6) hours of continuing education or 0.6 CEUs may carryover from one year to the next to meet the next year's continuing education requirement. However, the same hours may not be carried forward more than one (1) renewal cycle.

1.5 Lost or Misplaced CEU Certificates

If you have earned CEUs and now cannot find your CEU certificate(s), call the training provider from whom you took the training class. The training provider is the ONLY

entity that can issue a new or duplicate CEU certificate for their class (es). The awarding of CEUs is based on attendance; since the trainer that provided the class is the ONLY entity that has attendance records they must re-verify your attendance before a duplicate license will be issued.

Section 2: Relevant Training

Not all training that is offered for water and wastewater operators qualifies for use toward the continuing education requirement. The IBOL CE Coordinator will approve or not approve training sessions or courses based on their relevancy as discussed below.

2.1 Relevant Training is Required

Training is required to be relevant for licensed drinking water operators by federal requirements and WWP Board rules and guidelines to assure that operators are qualified to operate a public drinking water system or a public wastewater system through pertinent knowledge, skills and capabilities that protect public health and the source waters of the state.

2.2 Relevant Training Defined

Relevant training is instruction or education that is pertinent to or consistent with what an operator needs to understand to successfully perform a water or wastewater job. Since the purpose for adequate transport and treatment of water and wastewater is to protect human health and the environment, relevant training must include instruction that familiarizes an operator with public health issues and source water protection issues. Finally, relevant training is identifiable as only that information an operator “needs to know” which does not include information superfluous to the water or wastewater aspect of the job. For example, a class on Sexual Harassment Issues in the Workplace would be superfluous to what an individual needs to understand to knowledgeably perform or operate his/her duties as an operator of a water or wastewater transportation or treatment system.

Section 3: Selecting An Approved Training Classes

Water and wastewater operators may take any training they choose, however, not all training available for operators to take qualifies toward meeting the continuing education CEUs required for license renewal. Make sure your training decisions are informed

decisions so you don't have too few APPROVED CEUs to meet the continuing education requirement when it's time to renew your license.

3.1 Types of Training Classes

Acceptable training courses can be taught in a variety of styles including traditional classroom training, hands on demonstration training, or alternative education classes such as correspondence and on-line courses if they have been pre-approved on a case-by-case basis.

3.2 Individual Operator Training Class Selection Responsibilities

Finding out if a training session is approved before attending may be particularly important if you are only allowed a limited amount of time away from the job for training. Consider the following points to ensure the training class selected will count toward the continuing education required for license renewal.

- ◆ It is the operator's responsibility to make sure the training session has been approved and CEUs have been assigned PRIOR to taking the course if he/she plans to use it for the continuing education required for license renewal.
- ◆ Verify the number and type of CEUs assigned prior to taking the class. Water or water/wastewater type CEUs must be earned to qualify toward the renewal of a water license. Likewise, wastewater or water/wastewater type CEUs must be earned to count toward a wastewater license renewal.
- ◆ If the relevancy, number, and type of CEUs are not clear to you in the training session promotional materials, contact the TRAINING PROVIDER to find out if the course has been approved for relevancy and CEUs before you register.

3.3 Other Issues Operators Need to Know When Selecting A Training Class

The criteria to determine whether a training session is relevant and approvable are based on the Associated Boards of Certification "Needs to Know Criteria". However, the ABC "Needs to Know Criteria" only addresses relevant subject matter and does not address whether a class should or could qualify for dual water and wastewater CEUs, how many times the same class can be taken for credit (class frequency limits), or whether all types of information should be viewed as equal when assigning CEUs. Some of these issues are discussed and criteria established below to help you decide if you have or have not earned enough CEUs during each licensure renewal cycle.

3.3.1 Dual CEUs

Dual CEUs qualify for license renewal for either a water or wastewater license, or both. There is only one type of training class for which an operator can earn "dual CEUs"—the classes that qualify for the water/wastewater type CEUs. Neither water CEUs nor wastewater CEUs qualifies as "dual CEUs." Classes that are designated water/wastewater are equally applicable to water and wastewater systems. Three examples of classes that apply equally to water and wastewater are: "Pumps and Motors", "Disinfection", and "Basic Electricity".

3.3.2 Class Frequency Limits

An operator can take a training class as many times as he/she wants, however, some classes can only be repeated at specified intervals and have all the CEUs count toward the continuing education CEU requirement. The frequency limits for having CEUs qualify for the continuing education requirements are shown in Table 1. An operator may choose to take classes more frequently than the interval listed in Table 1, but those CEUs ARE NOT ELIGIBLE to meet licensure renewal requirements, even though they may qualify toward employment promotions, educational degrees, or other goals.

The frequency for repeating a class for renewal credit is based on a 2-year cycle.

If a class type is not found in Table 1, it has no frequency limit and may be taken as often as desired with all CEUs being eligible toward the continuing education requirement for licensure renewal.

Table 1. Water and Wastewater Operator Training Frequency Limits and CEUs

Class Topic	Frequency Limit for Renewal Credit	Comments on CEUs
ABC Needs-to-Know Topic	Once every two years	CEUs for any class that has been approved by the IROL CE Coordinator as meeting the relevancy standards set forth by the ABC "Needs-To-Know-Criteria" may only be applied to meet the continuing education requirement once every two years

Class Topic	Frequency Limit for Renewal Credit	Comments on CEUs
Biology (Basic or General)	One time per operator	<p>CEUs issued for a <u>Basic or General Biology</u> class may only be applied to meet the continuing education requirement one time per operator.</p> <p><i>Note: The one time limit pertains to a semester or year long college or university course that is a broad-based coverage of the subject matter. The one time limit does not apply to selected portions of the general subject matter that may be studied in detail as a separate college course, i.e., Earth Science, Advanced Biology, Microbiology, Aquatic Entomology, etc. The one time limitation does not apply to short courses, workshops or training of less than a week on the general topic or a selected subtopic of the general topic, i.e. Biological Trickling Filters, Biology of Biosolids, Pathogens in the Wastewater Lab, etc.</i></p>
Physical Science (Basic or General)	One time per operator	<p>CEUs issued for a <u>Basic or General Physical Science</u> class may only be applied to meet the continuing education requirement one time per operator.</p> <p><i>Note: The one time limitation pertains to a semester or year long college or university course that is a broad-based coverage of the subject matter. The one time limitation does not apply to select portions of the general subject matter that may be studied in detail as a separate college course. The one time limitation does not apply to short courses, workshops or training of less than a week on the general topic or a selected subtopic of the general topic.</i></p>

Class Topic	Frequency Limit for Renewal Credit	Comments on CEUs
<p>Chemistry (Basic or General)</p>	<p>One time per operator</p>	<p>CEUs issued for a <u>General Chemistry</u> class may only be applied to meet the continuing education requirement one time per operator.</p> <p><i>Note: The one time limitation pertains to a semester or year long college or university course that is a broad based coverage of the subject matter. The one time limitation does not apply to select portions of the general subject matter that may be studied in detail as a separate college course, i.e. Organic Chemistry or Biochemistry. The one time limitation does not apply to short courses, workshops or training of less than a week on the general topic or a selected subtopic of the general topic.</i></p>
<p>Licensure Exam Preparatory or Exam Review Class</p>	<p>Twice every two years</p>	<p>CEUs issued for each type or level of <u>Licensure Exam Preparatory or Exam Review Class</u> may be applied to meet the continuing education requirement twice every two years (twice per each 2 year licensure renewal cycle)</p> <p><i>Note 1: A licensure exam preparatory class may be taken a THIRD time during a single continuing education/licensure renewal cycle and qualify for relevant CEUs <u>ONLY IF</u> the actual licensure exam has been taken and failed AND the exam preparatory class is taken during the next exam cycle following the first time the exam is taken.</i></p> <p><i>Note 2: CEUs offered for Licensure Exam Preparatory or Exam Review Classes given by or in states other than Idaho DO NOT qualify or count toward the Idaho continuing education requirement for license renewal.</i></p>

Class Topic	Frequency Limit for Renewal Credit	Comments on CEUs
Computer Training (General)	No credit	CEUs issued for <u>Computer Training</u> including, but not limited to, general software programs, general word processing or software training on unrelated topics, i.e. software training on personal IRS tax forms cannot be used and DO NOT APPLY to meet the continuing education requirement.
Computer Training (System Related)	Once every two years	CEUs issued for <u>Computer Training</u> such as Excel, Access or other spreadsheet or database development computer classes specific to the system you work on, or site specific SCADA or telemetry computer classes (with documentation showing site specific nature) may be applied to meet up to 50% of the continuing education requirement once every two years (once per each 2 year licensure renewal cycle).
CPR Training	Once every four years	CEUs issued for <u>CPR training</u> may be applied to meet the continuing education requirement once every four years (once per TWO 2-year licensure renewal cycles).
First Aid	Once every four years	CEUs issued for <u>First Aid</u> training may be applied to meet the continuing education requirement once every four years (once per TWO 2-year licensure renewal cycles).
Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) Training	Once every four years	CEUs issued for <u>Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) Training</u> may be applied to meet the continuing education requirement once every four years (once per TWO 2-year licensure renewal cycles).

Class Topic	Frequency Limit for Renewal Credit	Comments on CEUs
SCBA Training	Once every four years	CEUs issued for <u>SCBA training</u> may be applied to meet the continuing education requirement once every four years (once per TWO 2-year licensure renewal cycles).
Safety (General and Personal)	Once every four years	<p>CEUs issued for <u>General and Personal Safety</u> classes including, but not limited to Confined Space, Trenching/Shoring, Chemical Storage & Handling, Chlorine Safety, and Electrical Grounding may be applied to meet the continuing education requirement once every four years (once per TWO 2-year licensure renewal cycles).</p> <p><i>Note: CEUs CAN NOT BE APPLIED toward water or wastewater licensure renewal for general and personal safety topics such as Defensive Driving Classes, Personal Hygiene Classes, and Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Review Classes.</i></p>
Safety Program Administration	One time	<p>CEUs issued for <u>Basic or General Safety Program Administration</u> may only be applied to meet the continuing education requirement one time in an administrator's career.</p> <p><i>Note: The one time limitation per administrator pertains to the general or basic overall administration of a safety program. The one time restriction does not apply if training is needed to learn or become acquainted with new areas of information, new guidelines for a specific area or safety component or if training is needed to learn about updates or changes to selected guidelines or rules within the realm of the whole safety program.</i></p>

Section 4: Sponsoring a Training Class

An individual operator or a group of operators can sponsor a training class, seminar or conference, provided they submit the same IBOL Education Approval Form required of any other training provider. If you want to sponsor a class the first step is to get a copy of the WWP Board publication, "*Idaho Training Class and Instructor Approval Guidelines for Water and Wastewater Training Providers*". Then fill out the IBOL Education Approval Form submit it to the IBOL CE Coordinator (30 days proposed rule or 60 days under existing rule?) before the training session is scheduled to be held.

A copy of the training provider guidelines and all necessary forms can be obtained from IBOL's web site at www.Ibol.idaho.gov/wwp.htm.

Section 5: CEU Credit for Out-of-State Training Or Alternative Education

It is possible to get CEUs that can be applied to the Idaho license renewal for out-of-state training or for alternative education courses, if the class is approved first. Out-of-state training and alternative education are discussed in more detail below.

5.1 Training Held Outside of Idaho

Licensed water and wastewater operators may choose to take training classes in neighboring states, or attend a regional or national educational conference. The same requirements apply when taking in-state and out-of-state training. Verify that the class has been approved by the IBOL CE Coordinator or IBOL CE Coordinator equivalent in the home state where the training is being offered. Then see if the class or classes have been assigned CEUs and whether they are water, wastewater or water/wastewater CEUs. If answers to these questions are not clear from the promotional materials call Idaho's IBOL CE Coordinator. While many states have similar requirements, Idaho has no official training reciprocity agreement with any other state or higher educational institution. The operator must verify that the Idaho IBOL CE Coordinator will accept another state's approval and assignment of CEUs or work with the Idaho IBOL CE Coordinator to get approval of the training for Idaho operators BEFORE taking the class.

It is the responsibility of the operator wishing to take a training class or attend a work conference in another state to first check with the training provider or sponsor BEFORE attending to verify that CEUs earned at the training/conference will be honored in Idaho.

5.2 Alternative Education

Licensed water and wastewater operators may choose to take training through an approved form of alternative education to meet routine continuing education

requirements. Alternative educational courses, more commonly known as distance learning, can be very convenient for operators living and working in remote locations or who can't get time off work to attend classroom type training. The alternative educational arena continues to offer new and different options. Alternative education may include a written correspondence course such as a Ken Kerri course from California State University, or may be on-line or on a CD-ROM, video, satellite, etc. It is possible to get CEU credit toward license renewal for these classes, but EACH CLASS has to be APPROVED FIRST. The key to having a successful alternative education experience is to FIRST submit EVERY CLASS to the Idaho IBOL CE Coordinator for a standard review, evaluation and assignment of number and type of CEUs. Alternative education requires every course to be submitted to the IBOL CE Coordinator on a case-by-case basis. The IBOL CE Coordinator will let the operator know if a class has already been submitted and CEUs assigned.

Section 6: Contacts

Direct questions regarding continuing education requirements, CEUs required, contact information, and information on specific training classes to the Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses Web site at www.ibol.idaho.gov.wwp.htm or e-mail by wwp@ibol.idaho.gov or by calling 208-334-3233 and asking for the IBOL CE Coordinator.