

CHAPTER 81
OPERATOR CERTIFICATION: PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS
AND WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

[Prior to 7/1/83, DEQ Ch 21]

[Prior to 12/3/86, Water, Air and Waste Management[900]]

567—81.1(455B) Definitions. In addition to the definitions in Iowa Code section 455B.211, the following definitions shall apply to this chapter.

“Activated sludge system” means a biological wastewater treatment process in which a mixture of wastewater and sludge floc, produced in a raw or settled wastewater by the growth of microorganisms, is agitated and aerated in the presence of a sufficient concentration of dissolved oxygen, followed by sedimentation. Examples include, but are not limited to, conventional activated sludge systems, extended aeration activated sludge systems, oxidation ditches, and sequencing batch reactors.

“Advanced aerated lagoon system” means an aerated lagoon system that has been augmented by adding other treatment processes. Examples include, but are not limited to, covered lagoon systems with enhanced aeration and mixing, the addition of fixed film processes to the lagoon process, or the utilization of algal-based treatment processes.

“Aerated lagoon system” means a lagoon system which utilizes aeration to enhance oxygen transfer and mixing in the cell.

“Aeration” means the process of initiating contact between air and water. Examples include, but are not limited to, spraying the water in the air, bubbling air through the water, or forcing the air into the water by pressure.

“Average daily pumpage” means the total quantity of water pumped during the most recent one-year period of record divided by 365 days.

“Chlorination” means the addition of a chlorine compound or chlorine gas to water to inactivate pathogenic organisms.

“Classification” means the type of plant or distribution system: wastewater treatment plants, water treatment plants, or water distribution systems.

“Coagulation” means a process using coagulation chemicals and mixing by which colloidal and suspended materials are destabilized and agglomerated into flocs.

“Community water system (CWS)” means a public water supply system which has at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents.

“Continuing education unit (CEU)” means ten contact hours of participation in an organized education experience approved by an accredited college, university, technical institute, or issuing agency, or by the department, and must be directly related to the subject matter of the particular certificate to which the credit is being applied.

“Directly related post-high school education” means post-high school education in chemistry, microbiology, biology, math, engineering, water, wastewater, or other curriculum pertaining to plant and distribution system operation.

“Director” means the director of the department of natural resources or a designee.

“Direct responsible charge (DRC)” means, where shift operation is not required, accountability for and performance of active, daily on-site operation of the plant or distribution system, or of a major segment of the plant or distribution system. Where shift operation is required, “direct responsible charge” means accountability for and performance of active, daily on-site operation of an operating shift, or a major segment of the plant or distribution system. A city manager, superintendent of public works, city clerk, council member, business manager, or other administrative official shall not be deemed to have direct responsible charge of a plant or distribution system unless this person’s duties include the active, daily on-site operation of the plant or distribution system. On-site operation may not necessarily mean full-time attendance at the plant or distribution system.

“Direct surface water filtration” means a water treatment system that applies surface water and groundwater under the influence (influenced groundwater as defined in rule 567—40.2(455B)) directly

to the filters after chemical treatment consisting of coagulation and flocculation or chemical treatment consisting of coagulation. This type of system eliminates the sedimentation unit process.

“Disinfection” means a process which inactivates pathogenic organisms in water by chemical oxidants or equivalent agents.

“Electrodialysis” means the demineralization of water by the removal of ions through special membranes under the influence of a direct-current electric field.

“Fixed film biological treatment” means a treatment process in which wastewater is passed over a media onto which are attached biological organisms capable of oxidizing the organic matter, normally followed by sedimentation. Examples include, but are not limited to, trickling filters, rotating biological contactors, packed towers and activated filters.

“Fluoridation” means the addition of fluoride to produce the optimum fluoride concentration in water.

“Grade” means one of seven certification levels, designated as A, W, I, IL, II, III, or IV.

“Ion exchange” means the process of using ion exchange materials such as resin or zeolites to remove undesirable ions from water and substituting acceptable ions, for example, ion exchange for nitrate removal or ion exchange for softening.

“Issuing agency” means a professional, technical/educational organization authorized by the department to provide continuing education for certification renewal or upgrade in accordance with the commitments and guidelines detailed in the written issuing agency agreement and procedures.

“Military service” means honorably serving on federal active duty, state active duty, or national guard duty, as defined in Iowa Code section 29A.1; in the military services of other states, as provided in 10 U.S.C. Section 101(c); or in the organized reserves of the United States, as provided in 10 U.S.C. Section 10101.

“Military service applicant” means an individual requesting credit toward certification for military education, training, or service obtained or completed in military service.

“Nontransient noncommunity water system (NTNC)” means a public water system other than a community water system which regularly serves at least 25 of the same persons four hours or more per day for four or more days per week for 26 or more weeks per year.

“Operating shift” means a specified period of time when an operator is present to conduct testing or evaluation to control operations of the plant or distribution system, to make process control changes, and to be responsible for the repair or maintenance of a plant or distribution system. An operating shift may include on-call shifts.

“Operator-in-charge” means a person or persons on site in direct responsible charge for a plant or distribution system. A city manager, superintendent of public works, city clerk, council member, business manager, or other administrative official shall not be deemed to be the operator-in-charge of a plant or distribution system unless this person’s duties include the active, daily on-site operation of the plant or distribution system. On-site operation may not necessarily mean full-time attendance at the plant or distribution system.

“Plant” means those facilities which are identified as either a water treatment plant, defined as that portion of the water supply system which in some way alters the physical, chemical, or bacteriological quality of the water, or a wastewater treatment plant, defined as the facility or group of units used for the treatment of wastewater from public sewer systems and for the reduction and handling of solids removed from such wastes.

“Population equivalent” for a wastewater treatment plant means the calculated number of people who would contribute the same biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) per day as the system in question, assuming that each person contributes 0.167 pounds of five-day, 20°C, BOD per day.

“Post-high school education” means credit received for completion of courses given or cosponsored by an accredited college, university, technical institute, or issuing agency. Courses offered by regulatory agencies may also be recognized as post-high school education. One year of post-high school education is 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours or 45 CEUs of credit.

“Primary treatment” means a treatment process designed to remove organic and inorganic settleable solids from wastewater by the physical process of sedimentation.

“*Public water system certificate*” means a certificate issued by the department certifying that an operator has successfully completed the certification requirements of this chapter. The certificate specifies the grades and classifications for which the certificate is valid.

“*Reverse osmosis*” means the process in which external pressure is applied to mineralized water against a semipermeable membrane to effectively reduce total dissolved solids (TDS) and radionuclides content as the water is forced through the membrane.

“*Rural water district*” means a water supply incorporated and organized as such pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 357, 357A or 358.

“*Shift operator*” means the operator on site who has responsibility for making process control changes and adjustments to the operation, repair, and maintenance of a plant or distribution system during any operating shift. Duties include testing or evaluation to control operations of the plant or distribution system.

“*Stabilization*” means the addition of chemical compounds to water to maintain an ionic equilibrium whereby the water is not in a depository or corrosive state.

“*Veteran*” means an individual who meets the definition of “veteran” in Iowa Code section 35.1(2).

“*Waste stabilization lagoon*” means an excavation designed and constructed to receive raw or pretreated wastewater in which stabilization is accomplished by several natural self-purification processes. This definition includes both anaerobic and aerobic lagoons.

“*Wastewater treatment plant*” means the facility or group of units used for the treatment of wastewater from public sewer systems and for the reduction and handling of solids removed from such wastes.

“*Water distribution system*” means that portion of the water supply system in which water is conveyed from the water treatment plant or other supply point to the premises of the consumer, including storage facilities and pumping stations. For the purposes of this chapter, a water distribution system does not include individual service lines to the premises of the consumer, which are not under the control of the system.

“*Water supply system*” means the system of pipes, structures, and facilities through which water for a public water supply is obtained, treated, sold or distributed for human consumption or household use.

“*Water treatment plant*” means that portion of the water supply system which in some way alters the physical, chemical, or microbiological quality of the water.

[ARC 1911C, IAB 3/18/15, effective 4/22/15; ARC 3735C, IAB 4/11/18, effective 5/16/18; ARC 6193C, IAB 2/9/22, effective 3/16/22]

567—81.2(455B) General.

81.2(1) *Plant grade for system with multiple treatment processes.* A plant having a combination of treatment processes that are in different grades shall be assigned the highest numerical plant grade of that combination.

81.2(2) *Increase in facility grade for complex systems.* The director may increase a plant or water distribution system grade above that indicated in rules 567—81.3(455B) to 567—81.6(455B) for those systems which in the judgment of the director include unusually complex treatment processes, complex distribution systems, or which present unusual operation or maintenance conditions.

81.2(3) *Operator-in-charge certification requirement.* The operator-in-charge shall hold a certificate of the same classification of the plant or water distribution system and of equal or higher grade than the grade designated for that plant or distribution system.

81.2(4) *Shift operator certification.* Any person who is responsible for the operation of an operating shift of a plant or distribution system or major segment of the plant or distribution system and is under the supervision of the operator-in-charge identified in 81.2(3) shall be certified in a grade no less than a Grade II level for Grade III and IV plants and distribution systems and Grade I for Grade I and II plants and distribution systems.

81.2(5) *Public water system certificate requirement.* The operator who is designated by the owner to be the operator-in-charge of both the water treatment plant and the water distribution system shall hold

a public water system (PWS) certificate valid for water treatment and water distribution in accordance with 81.2(3) and 81.2(6).

81.2(6) PWS certificate. A PWS certificate shall be issued to an operator successfully completing water treatment or water distribution certification. The PWS certificate shall specify the grade and classification for which the certificate is valid. An operator successfully completing both water treatment and water distribution certification shall be issued a PWS certificate valid for both classifications. For purposes of renewal, all renewal fees and CEU requirements shall be applied as one certification. The number of CEUs required shall be determined by the highest certification grade on the operator's public water system certificate.

81.2(7) PWS certificate issuance. Rescinded IAB 1/7/04, effective 2/11/04.

81.2(8) Notification requirements for a personnel change in the operator-in-charge. The owner of a plant or distribution system must notify the department of a change in operator(s)-in-charge within 30 days after the change.

81.2(9) Change of address or employment. Certified operators must report to the department a change in address or employment within 30 days after the change.

81.2(10) Owner reporting requirements. All owners of plants and distribution systems must report, when requested by the department, the method of treatment provided, the average daily pumpage, and the operator(s)-in-charge.

81.2(11) Compliance plan. When the director allows the owner of a plant or distribution system required to have a certified operator time to obtain an operator, the owner must submit a compliance plan indicating what action will be taken to obtain a certified operator. The plan must be on Form 52, Compliance Plan 542-3120, provided by the department and must be submitted within 30 days of the facility owner's receipt of a notice of violation.

567—81.3(455B) Wastewater treatment plant grades.

81.3(1) Classifications. The wastewater treatment plant classifications are listed in the following table:

Wastewater Treatment Plant Classifications

Treatment Type	Grade				
	Based on Design Pounds of BOD ₅ /day				
	less than 334	334-835	836-2,505	2,506-8,350	more than 8,350
	Based on Design Population Equivalent				
	less than 2,000	2,000-5,000	5,001-15,000	15,001-50,000	more than 50,000
1. Onsite Treatment System	W	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
2. Waste Stabilization Lagoon System	IL	IL	IL	IL	IL
3. Aerated Lagoon System	IL	IL	I	I	I
4. Advanced Aerated Lagoon System	II	II	II	II	II
5. Fixed Film Biological Treatment System	II	II	III	III	IV
6. Activated Sludge System	II	III	III	IV	IV

81.3(2) Unknown design BOD₅ loading. When the design BOD₅ loading is unknown, the plant BOD₅ loading shall be determined by using the average pounds of BOD₅ of the 24-hour composite influent samples taken in the last 12 months. If 24-hour composite influent samples are not available, then grab samples shall be used.

81.3(3) IL wastewater operator requirements. A Grade I, II, III, or IV wastewater treatment certificate will satisfy the certification requirements for a Grade IL plant.

81.3(4) Grade W onsite wastewater classification. Any wastewater treatment plant that discharges to a water of the state and that utilizes onsite wastewater treatment technologies, such as those specified in 567—Chapter 69, but excluding waste stabilization ponds, shall be classified as an onsite treatment system (Grade W).

[ARC 6193C, IAB 2/9/22, effective 3/16/22]

567—81.4(455B) Water treatment plant grades.

81.4(1) Classifications. The water treatment plant classifications are listed in the following table:

Water Treatment Plant Classifications

Treatment Type	Grade*			
	Average Daily Pumpage in MGD			
	0-0.1	>0.1-0.5	>0.5-1.5	>1.5
1. Iron or manganese removal; aeration; chlorination; fluoridation; stabilization; any other chemical addition; or any combination of these processes	I	II	II	III
2. Ion exchange	II	II	III	III
3. Direct surface water filtration	II	II	III	III
4. Utilization of lime, soda ash or other chemical addition for pH adjustment in the precipitation and coagulation of iron or manganese	II	II	III	III
5. Complete surface water clarification or lime softening of surface water or groundwater	III	III	III	IV
6. Reverse osmosis and electro dialysis	II	II	III	IV
7. Activated carbon for THM or synthetic organics removal	III	III	III	IV

*For Grade A water supply classification, see subrule 81.6(1).

81.4(2) Average daily pumpage. When the average daily pumpage is unknown, the plant grade will be determined from the population of the most recent census and an evaluation of commercial, industrial, and other users.

567—81.5(455B) Water distribution system grades.

81.5(1) Classifications. The water distribution plant classifications are listed in the following table:

Water Distribution System Classifications*

System Type	Grade**			
	Average Daily Pumpage in MGD			
	0-0.1	>0.1-1.5	>1.5-5	>5
All municipal water systems	I	II	III	IV
Community water systems not classified as a Grade A water system	I	II	III	IV
Nontransient noncommunity water systems not classified as a Grade A water system	I	II	III	IV
Transient noncommunity water systems not classified as a Grade A water system	I	II	III	IV
	Miles of Pipe			
	0-100	>100-1,000	>1,000-2,500	>2,500
Rural water districts	II	II	III	IV

*Note: A public water system with a well, storage, and a distribution system shall be classified as a water distribution system if no treatment is provided.

**For Grade A water system classification, see subrule 81.6(1).

81.5(2) Average daily pumpage. When the average daily pumpage is unknown, the system grade will be determined from the population of the most recent census and an evaluation of commercial, industrial, and other users.

81.5(3) IR certificate holders. Rescinded IAB 1/7/04, effective 2/11/04.
[ARC 6193C, IAB 2/9/22, effective 3/16/22]

567—81.6(455B) Grade A classification.

81.6(1) Grade A water system classification.

a. Community water system. A community water system, other than a municipal or rural water system, which serves a population of 250 persons or less and provides no treatment other than hypochlorination or treatment which does not require any chemical addition, process adjustment, backwashing or media regeneration by an operator shall be classified as a Grade A water system.

b. Nontransient noncommunity water system. A nontransient noncommunity water system which serves a population of 500 persons or less and provides no treatment other than hypochlorination or treatment which does not require any chemical addition, process adjustment, backwashing or media regeneration by an operator shall be classified as a Grade A water system.

c. Transient noncommunity water system. A transient noncommunity water system which serves a population of 500 or fewer persons and provides no treatment other than hypochlorination or treatment which does not require any chemical addition, process adjustment, backwashing or media regeneration by an operator shall be classified as a Grade A water system.

81.6(2) Certification requirements for Grade A water systems. Any grade of water treatment certification will satisfy the certification requirements for a Grade A water system with hypochlorination. Any grade of water distribution certification will satisfy the certification requirements for a Grade A water system without hypochlorination.

[ARC 3735C, IAB 4/11/18, effective 5/16/18]

567—81.7(455B) Operator education and experience qualifications.

81.7(1) Education and experience requirements. All applicants shall meet the education and experience requirements for the grade of certificate shown in the table below prior to being allowed to take the examination. Experience shall be in the same classification for which the applicant is applying except that partial credit may be given in accordance with subrules 81.7(2) and 81.7(3). Directly related post-high school education shall be in the same subject matter as the classification in which the applicant is applying. The director will determine which courses qualify as “directly related” in cases which are not clearly defined. A military service applicant may apply for credit for verified military education, training, or service toward any education or experience requirement for certification, pursuant to subrule 81.7(4).

Operator Education and Experience Qualifications

Grade	Education	Substitution for Education	Experience	Substitution for Experience
A	High school diploma or GED	None	Completion of an IDNR-approved training course	None
W	High school diploma or GED	None	Completion of an IDNR-approved training course	None
I	High school diploma or GED	None	1 year	See 81.7(3) "b"(1), (3) to (5)
IL	High school diploma or GED	None	1 year	See 81.7(3) "b"(1), (3) to (5)
II	High school diploma or GED	None	3 years	See 81.7(3) "b"(2) to (5)
III	High school diploma or GED and 2 years of post-high school education (1 year must be directly related)	See 81.7(3) "a" (1), (3)	4 years of experience in a Grade I or higher	See 81.7(3) "b"(2), (3)
IV	High school diploma or GED and 4 years of post-high school education (2 years must be directly related)	See 81.7(3) "a" (2), (3)	4 years of experience including 2 years of DRC in a Grade III or higher	See 81.7(3) "b"(2), (3) and 81.7(3) "c"

81.7(2) Related work experience. The following substitutions of related work experience for operating experience requirements may be accepted by the director.

a. Laboratory personnel. Laboratory personnel employed in water or wastewater treatment plants may be allowed 50 percent credit for work experience toward meeting the operating experience requirements for Grades I and II certification only. Laboratory experience must be in the same classification for which the applicant is applying.

b. Oversight personnel. Personnel with experience in on-site operation review and evaluation of plants and distribution systems may be allowed 50 percent credit for on-site work experience toward meeting the operating experience requirements for Grades I and II certification only. On-site experience must be in the same classification for which the applicant is applying.

c. Maintenance personnel. Maintenance personnel employed in water or wastewater treatment plants may be allowed 50 percent credit for work experience toward meeting the operating experience requirements for Grades I and II certification only. Maintenance experience may be applied either to the water or to the wastewater experience requirements.

d. Certified operators.

(1) Certified water treatment operators may be allowed 50 percent credit for work experience toward meeting the operating experience requirements for Grades I and II wastewater treatment certification only.

(2) Certified wastewater treatment operators may be allowed 50 percent credit for work experience toward meeting the operating experience requirements for Grades I and II water treatment certification only.

(3) Certified water treatment operators may be allowed 50 percent credit for work experience toward meeting the operating experience requirements for Grades I and II water distribution certification only.

(4) Certified water distribution operators may be allowed 50 percent credit for work experience toward meeting the operating experience requirements for Grades I and II water treatment certification only.

e. Limitation. The portion of related work experience that is substituted for operating experience cannot also be used to substitute for education.

81.7(3) Experience and education substitutions. The following substitutions for experience or education may be accepted by the director.

a. Substitution of experience for education.

(1) One year of operating experience in a Grade II or higher position may be substituted for one year of post-high school education for Grade III certification up to one-half of the post-high school education requirement.

(2) One year of operating experience in a Grade III or higher position may be substituted for one year of post-high school education for Grade IV certification up to one-half of the post-high school education requirement.

(3) Two years of direct responsible charge experience in a Grade III or higher position may be substituted for one year of directly related post-high school education for Grade IV certification up to three-fourths of the post-high school education requirement.

(4) That portion of experience which is applied toward substitution for education cannot also be used for experience.

b. Substitutions of education for experience.

(1) Two semester hours or three quarter hours or three CEUs of directly related post-high school education may be substituted for one-half the experience requirement for Grades I and II.

(2) Thirty semester hours or 45 quarter hours or 45 CEUs of post-high school education may be substituted for one year of experience up to a maximum of one-half the experience requirement for Grades II, III and IV.

(3) That portion of education which is applied toward substitution for experience cannot also be used for education.

(4) Class hours involving closely supervised on-the-job type training in a pilot or full-scale facility where there are clearly defined educational objectives may be applied to the on-the-job experience requirement. The substitution value of such training shall be applicable only toward obtaining a Grade I and Grade II certification and shall not exceed one-half year of on-the-job experience. One hour of on-the-job training is equivalent to three hours of on-the-job experience. One month of on-the-job training consists of 20 eight-hour days. Credit for on-the-job training may be applied only to the examination for the type of system in which the experience was obtained.

(5) That portion of on-the-job training courses which is applied toward substitution for the on-the-job experience requirement cannot also be used for education.

c. Substitution of education for direct responsible charge experience. Thirty semester hours or 45 quarter hours or 45 CEUs of directly related post-high school education may be substituted for one year of direct responsible charge experience up to one-half the requirement for Grade IV certification.

81.7(4) Military education, training, and service credit.

a. The applicant shall identify the experience or education certification requirements for which the credit is requested.

b. As part of the examination application pursuant to subrule 81.9(1), the applicant shall provide documents, military transcripts, a certified affidavit, or forms that verify completion of the relevant military education, training, or service, which may include, when applicable, the applicant's Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214) or Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET) (DD Form 2586).

[ARC 1911C, IAB 3/18/15, effective 4/22/15; ARC 3735C, IAB 4/11/18, effective 5/16/18; ARC 6193C, IAB 2/9/22, effective 3/16/22]

567—81.8(455B) Certification and examination fees.

81.8(1) Examination fee. The examination fee for each examination shall be \$30.

81.8(2) Oral examination fee. Rescinded IAB 4/11/18, effective 5/16/18.

81.8(3) Reciprocity application fee. The reciprocity application fee for each type of classification shall be \$30.

81.8(4) Certification fee. The certification fee shall be \$20 for each one-half year of a two-year period from the date of issuance to June 30 of odd-numbered years.

81.8(5) Renewal fee. The certification renewal fee shall be \$60.

81.8(6) Penalty fee. The certification and renewal penalty fee shall be \$18.

81.8(7) Duplicate certificate fee. The duplicate certificate fee shall be \$20.

81.8(8) Temporary certificate fee. The temporary certificate fee shall be \$60.

81.8(9) Fee adjustments. The department may adjust the fees annually by up to plus or minus 20 percent to cover costs of administering and enforcing these rules and reimbursement for other expenses relating to operator certification. The environmental protection commission must approve any fee increases above those listed in 81.8(1) through 81.8(8). All fees collected shall be retained by the department for administration of the operator certification program.

[ARC 3735C, IAB 4/11/18, effective 5/16/18]

567—81.9(455B) Examinations.

81.9(1) Examination application. All persons wishing to take the examination required to become a certified operator of a wastewater or water treatment plant or a water distribution system shall complete the Operator Certification Examination Application, Form CFN-542-3118/CPG-63997. A listing of dates and locations of examinations is available from the department upon request. The application form requires the applicant to indicate educational background, training and past experience in water or wastewater operation. The completed application and examination fee shall be sent to Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Water Supply Section, 502 East Ninth Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034. The completed application and examination fee must be received by the department at least 30 days prior to the date of examination.

81.9(2) Application evaluation. The director shall designate department personnel to evaluate all applications for examination, certification, and renewal of certification and upgrading of certification. After evaluation of the application, the department will issue the applicant either a letter of examination eligibility or a letter of examination noneligibility that includes a description of the education or experience requirements that have not been met. The director will review applications when it is indicated that the applicant has falsified information or when questions arise concerning an applicant's qualifications of eligibility for examination or certification.

81.9(3) Application expiration. A properly completed application for examination shall be valid for one year from the date the application is approved by the department. An applicant may request only one class and grade of examination with each application. A new application shall be required with each different class or grade of examination desired by the applicant.

81.9(4) Refund of examination fee. An applicant who does not qualify for examination at the time of application will have the examination fee refunded if the applicant cannot qualify for examination within one year. If the applicant will qualify for a scheduled examination within one year, the applicant will be notified when the examination may be taken and the fee will not be refunded.

81.9(5) Reexamination. Upon failure of the first examination, the applicant may apply for reexamination. Upon failure of the second examination, the applicant shall be required to wait a period of at least 30 days between each subsequent examination.

81.9(6) Reexamination fee. Upon each reexamination when a valid application is on file, the applicant shall submit the examination fee to the department at least ten days prior to the date of examination.

81.9(7) Application invalidation. Failure to successfully complete the examination within one year from the date of approval of the application shall invalidate the application.

81.9(8) Retention of completed examinations. Rescinded IAB 1/7/04, effective 2/11/04.

81.9(9) Oral examination. Rescinded IAB 4/11/18, effective 5/16/18.

81.9(10) Reasonable accommodation. Upon request for certification by an applicant, the director will consider on an individual basis reasonable accommodation to allow administration of the examination without discrimination on the basis of disability. The applicant shall request the accommodation 30 days prior to the date of the examination. The applicant must provide documentation of eligibility for the accommodation. Documentation shall be submitted with the completed examination application.

[ARC 1911C, IAB 3/18/15, effective 4/22/15; ARC 3735C, IAB 4/11/18, effective 5/16/18]

567—81.10(455B) Certification by examination.

81.10(1) Examination requirement. All applicants not addressed for certification in 81.11(1) shall successfully complete and pass an examination prior to receiving certification.

81.10(2) Certification application time line. Application for certification must be received by the department within 30 days of the date the applicant receives notification of successful completion of the examination. All applications for certification shall be made on a form provided by the department and shall be accompanied by the certification fee.

81.10(3) Late certification application. Applications for certification by examination which are received more than 30 days but less than 60 days after notification of successful completion of the examination shall be accompanied by the certification fee and the penalty fee. Applicants who do not apply for certification within 60 days' notice of successful completion of the examination will not be certified on the basis of that examination.

567—81.11(455B) Certification by reciprocity.

81.11(1) Other states' mandatory certification programs. For applicants who have been certified under other states' mandatory certification programs, the equivalency of which has been previously reviewed and accepted by the department, certification in an appropriate classification and grade, without examination, will be recommended. The applicant must have successfully completed an examination generally equivalent to the Iowa examination and must meet the education and experience qualifications established by the director.

81.11(2) Other states' voluntary certification programs. For applicants who have been certified under voluntary certification programs in other states, certification in an appropriate class will be considered. The applicant must have successfully completed an examination generally equivalent to the Iowa examination and must meet the education and experience qualifications established by the director. The director may require the applicant to successfully complete the Iowa examination.

81.11(3) Reciprocity application.

a. All applicants. Applicants who seek Iowa certification pursuant to subrule 81.11(1) or 81.11(2) shall submit an Operator Certification Reciprocity Application accompanied by a letter requesting certification pursuant to these subrules. Application for certification pursuant to 81.11(1) and 81.11(2) shall be received by the director in accordance with these subrules. The applicant shall be certified at the appropriate grade pursuant to subrule 81.7(1).

b. Veteran applicants. An applicant who is a veteran shall submit an Operator Certification Reciprocity Application pursuant to paragraph 81.11(3) "a" and shall also provide such documentation as is needed to verify the applicant's status as a veteran under Iowa Code section 35.1(2). The veteran's application shall be given priority and shall be expedited.

81.11(4) Certification obtained through reciprocity. An applicant who obtains certification in Iowa through reciprocity and subsequently allows the certification to lapse will be required to reapply for certification in accordance with 567—81.10(455B).

[ARC 1911C, IAB 3/18/15, effective 4/22/15]

567—81.12(455B) Restricted certification. Upon written request by an operator, the director may determine that further education requirements be waived when a plant or distribution system grade has been increased and the operator has been in direct responsible charge of the existing plant or

distribution system. An operator successfully completing the examination will be restricted to that plant or distribution system until the education requirements are met.

[ARC 3735C, IAB 4/11/18, effective 5/16/18]

567—81.13(455B) Certification renewal.

81.13(1) *Renewal period.* All certificates shall expire on June 30 of odd-numbered years and must be renewed every two years in order to maintain certification.

81.13(2) *Application for renewal.* An application for renewal will be mailed to currently certified operators prior to the expiration date of their certificates. Application for renewal must be made in accordance with this rule and the instructions on the form in order to renew the certificate for the next two years. Application for renewal of a certificate without penalty must be received by the director or postmarked prior to the expiration of the certificate, and shall be accompanied by the certification renewal fee.

81.13(3) *Late application.* A late application for renewal of a certificate may be made provided that the application is received by the director or postmarked within 60 days of the expiration of the certificate on forms provided by the department. Such late application shall be accompanied by the penalty fee and the certification renewal fee.

81.13(4) *Failure to renew.* If a certificate holder fails to renew within 60 days following expiration of the certificate, the right to renew the certificate is automatically terminated. Certification may be allowed at any time following such termination, provided that the applicant meets all education and experience eligibility requirements pursuant to 567—81.7(455B), and successfully completes an examination. The applicant must then apply for certification in accordance with 567—81.10(455B).

81.13(5) *Expired certificate.* An operator may not continue as the operator-in-charge of a plant, distribution system, operating shift, or major segment of the plant or distribution system after expiration of a certificate unless the certificate is renewed.

567—81.14(455B,272C) Continuing education.

81.14(1) *CEU requirements.* Continuing education must be earned during two-year periods between April 1 and March 31 of odd-numbered years. A Grade III or IV certified operator must earn two units or 20 contact hours per certificate during each two-year period. All other certified operators must earn one unit or 10 contact hours per certificate during each two-year period. Newly certified operators (previously uncertified) who become certified after April 1 of a two-year period will not be required to earn CEUs until the next two-year period. If an operator upgrades a certificate after April 1 of a two-year period and that upgrade increases the CEU requirement, the operator will not be required to meet the higher CEU requirement until the next two-year period but must fulfill the lower CEU requirement for that period. For those certified operators holding both a water treatment and a water distribution certification, no less than 25 percent of the required CEUs may be earned in any one area.

81.14(2) *Certificate renewal.* Only those operators fulfilling the continuing education requirements before the end of each two-year period (March 31) will be allowed to renew their certificate(s). The certificate(s) of operators not fulfilling the continuing education requirements shall expire on June 30 of each odd-numbered year.

81.14(3) *CEU approval.* All activities for which continuing education credit will be granted must be approved by an accredited college, university, technical institute, or issuing agency, or by the department, and must be directly related to the subject matter of the particular certificate to which the credit is being applied. Any entity holding courses in Iowa for which continuing education credit is offered for water treatment, water distribution, or wastewater operator certification must provide at no cost to the department the opportunity for one staff member to audit the training and receive all training materials.

81.14(4) *CEU extensions.* The director may, in individual cases involving hardship or extenuating circumstances, grant an extension of up to three months within which the certified operator may fulfill the minimum continuing education requirements. Hardship or extenuating circumstances include documented health-related confinement or other circumstances beyond the control of the certified

operator which prevent attendance at the required activities. All requests for extensions must be made prior to March 31 of each biennium.

81.14(5) CEU reporting. It is the certified operator's personal responsibility to maintain a written record and to notify the department of the continuing education credit earned during the period. The continuing education credits earned during the period shall be listed on the application for renewal.

567—81.15(455B) Upgrading of certificates. A person holding an unexpired certificate may upgrade the certificate by examination to a higher grade in the same classification in accordance with 567—81.7(455B), 567—81.9(455B) and 567—81.10(455B). The expiration date of the upgraded certificate shall be the same as the unexpired certificate. A person who upgrades a certificate during the biennium must also renew the upgraded certificate in accordance with 567—81.13(455B) and 567—81.14(455B,272C) to maintain the person's certification.

567—81.16(455B) Operator by affidavit.

81.16(1) Affidavit allowance. The owner of a plant or distribution system that is required to have a Grade A, I, IL, or II certified operator may sign an affidavit with a certified operator of the required classification and grade.

81.16(2) Affidavit requirements. This affidavit will verify that the certified operator is the operator-in-charge and has direct responsibility for a plant or distribution system that does not have first rights on the services of that operator. The affidavit form shall be provided by the director and shall require the name and signature of the certified operator, the operator's certification number, class and grade, and the date of last renewal of the operator's certificate. The affidavit form shall be proof that the certified operator has agreed to be directly responsible for the operation and maintenance of the plant or distribution system. The director may specify additional operational and maintenance requirements based on the complexity and size of the plant or distribution system. Four duly notarized copies of the affidavit must be returned to and approved by the director, based upon the ability of the certified operator to properly operate and maintain additional facilities. In event of disapproval, the owner of the plant or distribution system must terminate the agreement with the certified operator and seek the services of another certified operator. Both the owner of the plant or distribution system and the certified operator shall notify the director at least 30 days before the termination of the agreement. [ARC 6193C, IAB 2/9/22, effective 3/16/22]

567—81.17(455B,272C) Disciplinary actions.

81.17(1) Reasons for disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may be taken against a certified operator on any of the grounds specified in Iowa Code section 455B.219 and chapter 272C and the following more specific grounds.

a. Failure to use reasonable care or judgment or to apply knowledge or ability in performing the duties of a certified operator.

(1) Wastewater operator duties. Examples of a wastewater operator's duties are specified in the Water Environment Federation Manual of Practice #11, 1996; California State University—Sacramento (CSUS) Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants, Volume I, 4th edition, 1998; CSUS Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants, Volume II, 4th edition, 1998; CSUS Advanced Waste Treatment, 3rd edition, 1998; and 567—Chapters 60 through 64, 67, and 83, Iowa Administrative Code.

(2) Water treatment or distribution operator duties. Examples of a water treatment or distribution operator's duties are specified in the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Manuals of Water Supply Practice (Volumes 1, 3-7, 9, 11-12, 14, 17, 19-38, 41-42, 44-48); AWWA Water Supply Operations Series, 2nd edition: Vol. 1, 1995; Vol. 2, 1995; Vol. 3, 1996; Vol. 4, 1995; and Vol. 5, 1995; AWWA Water Distribution Operator Handbook, 2nd edition, 1976; and California State University—Sacramento (CSUS) Water Treatment Plant Operation, Volume I, 4th edition, 1999; CSUS Water Treatment Plant Operation, Volume II, 3rd edition, 1998; CSUS Small Water System Operation and Maintenance, 4th edition, 1999; CSUS Water Distribution System Operation and Maintenance, 4th edition, 2000; and 567—Chapters 40 through 43 and 83, Iowa Administrative Code.

- b.* Failure to submit required records of operation or other reports required under applicable permits or rules of the department, including failure to submit complete records or reports.
- c.* Knowingly making any false statement, representation, or certification on any application, record, report or document required to be maintained or submitted under any applicable permit or rule of the department.
- d.* Fraud in procuring a license.
- e.* Professional incompetence.
- f.* Knowingly making misleading, deceptive, untrue or fraudulent representations in the practice of the licensee's profession or engaging in unethical conduct or practice harmful or detrimental to the public. Proof of actual injury need not be established.
- g.* Habitual intoxication or addiction to the use of drugs.
- h.* Conviction of criminal offenses directly related to the profession or occupation of the operator, consistent with Iowa Code sections 272C.1(8) and 272C.10(5).
- i.* Fraud in representations as to skill or ability.
- j.* Use of untruthful or improbable statements in advertisements.
- k.* Willful or repeated violations of the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 272C or 455B, division III.

81.17(2) *Disciplinary sanctions.* Disciplinary sanctions may include those specified in Iowa Code section 272C.3(2) and the following:

- a. Revocation of a certificate.* Revocation may be permanent without chance of recertification or for a specified period of time.
- b. Partial revocation or suspension.* Revocation or suspension of the practice of a particular aspect of the operation of a plant or distribution system, including the restriction of operation to a particular plant or distribution system, or a particular type of plant or distribution system.
- c. Probation.* Probation under specified conditions relevant to the specific grounds for disciplinary action.
- d. Additional education, training, and examination requirements.* Additional education, training, and reexamination may be required as a condition of reinstatement.
- e. Penalties.* Civil penalties not to exceed \$1,000 may be assessed for causes identified in 81.17(1).

81.17(3) *Procedure.*

a. Initiation of disciplinary action. The department staff shall initiate a disciplinary action by conducting such lawful investigation as is necessary to establish a legal and factual basis for action. The administrator of the environmental protection commission or designee shall make a decision as to any disciplinary action based on the department staff recommendations. Except as specified by this subrule, the disciplinary action shall be initiated by a notice of intended action in accordance with rule 561—7.16(17A,455A). At any time, the licensee and the department may enter into a settlement agreement, subject to approval by the director, which provides for a disciplinary sanction.

b. Request for hearing. Notwithstanding references in 561—subrule 7.16(4), a licensee shall be deemed to have waived any right to a contested case hearing unless the licensee appeals the action and requests a hearing within 30 days of receipt of the notice of intended action. If a timely appeal is filed, further contested case procedures shall apply in accordance with 561—Chapter 7.

c. Appeal and review of proposed decision. After a contested case hearing conducted in accordance with rule 561—7.14(17A,455A), the director shall review the presiding officer's proposed decision issued in accordance with 561—subrule 7.15(3). The proposed decision shall constitute a final decision of the director and the department unless the licensee or the director and department appeal the proposed decision to the environmental protection commission within 30 days of receipt as provided in 561—subrule 7.15(5).

d. Effective date of suspension or revocation. Notwithstanding any contrary interpretation in 561—subrule 7.16(7), suspension, revocation or other disciplinary action shall be effective 30 days after receipt of the notice of intended action if the licensee fails to file a timely appeal and request for hearing. If a contested case hearing is timely requested, the disciplinary action is effective as specified

in the presiding officer's proposed decision unless the licensee obtains a stay of the action in accordance with 561—subrule 7.15(7) pending a timely appeal to the environmental protection commission.

e. Emergency disciplinary action. The director may initiate an emergency suspension or other disciplinary action upon such grounds and following those procedures as provided in 561—subrule 7.16(6). The terms of the emergency order shall be effective upon service as provided in 561—subrule 7.16(7). The department shall promptly give notice of an opportunity to appeal and request a contested case hearing following the procedures as specified above.

f. Reinstatement of revoked certificates. Upon revocation of a certificate in accordance with the authority provided in Iowa Code section 455B.219 and chapter 272C, application for certification may be allowed after two years from the date of revocation unless otherwise specified in accordance with 81.17(2). Any such applicant must meet all education and experience eligibility requirements pursuant to 567—81.7(455B), and successfully complete an examination and be certified in the same manner as a new applicant.

81.17(4) Noncompliance with child support order procedures. Upon receipt of a certification of noncompliance with a child support obligation as provided in Iowa Code section 252J.7, the department will initiate procedures to deny an application for certification or renewal, or to suspend a certification in accordance with Iowa Code section 252J.8(4). The department shall issue to the person by restricted certified mail a notice of its intent to deny or suspend operator certification based on receipt of a certificate of noncompliance. The suspension or denial shall be effective 30 days after receipt of the notice unless the person provides the department with a withdrawal of the certificate of noncompliance from the child support recovery unit as provided in Iowa Code section 252J.8(4)“c.” Pursuant to Iowa Code section 252J.8(4), the person does not have a right to a hearing before the department to contest the denial or suspension action under this subrule but may seek a hearing in district court in accordance with Iowa Code section 252J.9.

[ARC 5976C, IAB 10/20/21, effective 11/24/21]

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 455B.211 to 455B.224 and chapter 272C.

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