



STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
CHUCK GIPP, DIRECTOR

TO: The Honorable Terry E. Branstad, Governor and the Iowa General Assembly

FROM: Chuck Gipp, Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources

RE: Iowa Code section 272C.4 DUTIES OF BOARD: Required Information and Statistics on Military Credit for IDNR Drinking Water & Wastewater Operator Certifications.

DATE: 12/15/2016

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources, IDNR, through **IAC 567—81.1(455B) Chapter 81: Operator Certification: Public Water Supply Systems and Wastewater Treatment Systems**, sets out regulations for the certification of public drinking water supply and wastewater treatment operators and includes exam eligibility requirements, exam protocols, continuing education requirements, renewal and training requirements, reciprocity requirements and all corresponding fees.

In May of 2014 Governor Branstad signed the “Home Base Iowa Act” which required all professional and occupational licensing boards, commissions, and other authorities subject to Iowa Code chapter 272C to adopt rules on military service and veteran certification. These rules were to address the process under which each board would provide credit toward licensure qualifications for military service, education, and training and the procedures for expediting reciprocal licensure for veterans who are licensed in other states. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is the licensing board for the certification of drinking water and wastewater treatment operators (Iowa Code section 272C.1(6)).

The Iowa Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment Operator Certification Program recognized that veterans represent a major recruiting opportunity for the water and wastewater industry long before the Home Base Iowa Act was signed and had been working with the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the US Department of Labor (DOL), the Iowa Department of Education and Prositions, a Professional Career Transition Expert, since 2012 to recruit and assimilate them

Water Supply Operations Section / 502 E. Ninth St. / Des Moines, IA 50319

Phone: 515-725-0282

Fax: 515-725-0348

www.iowadnr.gov

into our industry as quickly and seamlessly as possible. Military experience gives veterans an understanding of teamwork, discipline, community and personal accountability that make them excellent members of the water and wastewater industry. In addition, many veterans already possess technical skills and training that are directly transferable to careers in the water sector. Iowa Department of Natural Resources had already been actively granting credit toward eligibility for education, training, and service obtained or completed by an individual while serving honorably in the military forces.

In March of 2015, in response to the “Home Base Iowa Act”, IDNR made changes to **IAC 567—81.1** codifying the process by which the Department provides credit toward licensure qualifications for military service, education, and training and the procedures for expediting reciprocal licensure for veterans who are licensed in other states.

Forty-four (44) operators have become certified in Iowa using credit toward licensure that came from experience and training obtained and documented during their military service between April 1, 2015 and November 30, 2016. These operators collectively hold fourteen (14) wastewater treatment certifications, eighteen (18) drinking water treatment certifications and twelve (12) water distribution certifications. These thirty (30) veteran drinking water operators, water treatment and distribution, represent 27% of all new drinking water operators who entered the field since April 1, 2015. Likewise, these fourteen (14) wastewater veteran operators represent 13% of all new wastewater operators who entered the industry since April 1, 2015. This is a significant contribution when you factor in the drinking water and wastewater industry’s loss of workforce through retirement.