

567—134.4(455B) Suspension, revocation and denial of certification.

134.4(1) *General policy.* It is the policy of the department to enforce standards of professional and ethical conduct which are generally accepted within the professions which qualify persons for certification in Iowa as groundwater professionals. The department intends to rely on written standards of professional and ethical conduct and competency which are applicable to persons who qualify for certification by virtue of certification by or membership in a professional organization.

It is the policy of the department to investigate and enforce standards of conduct by certified groundwater professionals which fall within the scope of their professional relationships with the department, their clients and other state regulatory agencies including the Iowa comprehensive petroleum underground storage tank fund board and their agents.

134.4(2) *Lack of qualification.* The department may suspend, revoke or deny certification as a groundwater professional for any of the following reasons:

- a. A material misstatement of fact in an application for certification.
- b. Failure to provide the fee for certification.
- c. Loss of license, certification, or registration necessary to meet the certification requirements in subrule 134.2(2).
- d. Insufficient proof of qualifications required under rule 567—134.2(455B).
- e. Failure to successfully complete the certification requirements.
- f. Receipt of a “certificate of noncompliance” with a child support obligation and failure to provide a “withdrawal of a certificate of noncompliance” from the child support recovery unit as provided in Iowa Code chapter 252J.
- g. Default on an obligation owed to or collected by the state as provided in Iowa Code section 421.17(27)“e.”

134.4(3) *Discipline based on a single act or omission.* The department may suspend, revoke or deny certification based on substantial evidence of a single act or failure to act. The severity of the sanction may be based on the gravity of the act or omission and on the degree of culpability such as whether it was negligent, knowing, willful, or with such a degree of reckless disregard as to equate with intentional conduct. Single acts or omissions that may be grounds for discipline include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Fraudulent omissions or misstatements of material fact in any reports, correspondence or communications with the department.
- b. Violation of an ethical standard which the person knew or should have known and which results in or reasonably could have resulted in material consequences.
- c. Failure to report the presence of contamination to the parties reasonably believed to be responsible for reporting the contamination to the department as provided in 567—Chapter 131 and 567—135.6(455B).
- d. Knowingly making a material false statement, representation or certification on any application, record, report, or document required to be maintained or submitted by department rule or which is voluntarily submitted to the department.
- e. Gross incompetence in the performance of groundwater professional services and corrective action.
- f. Material misstatement of facts or misrepresentation of information required to be provided pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 455B, division IV, part 8.

134.4(4) *Discipline based on repeated acts or omissions.* The department may suspend, revoke or deny certification, based on substantial evidence of repeated acts or omissions which, when taken together indicate a lack of competency, professionalism, ethical conduct, or adherence to standards of performance generally expected by the profession. The severity of the sanction may be based on the gravity of the acts or omissions and the degree of culpability. Disciplinary sanctions under this subrule will not be applied without providing the person with at least one written notice of the deficiency and a written warning that future repetition may result in discipline. Conduct or omissions which may be a basis for discipline include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Repeated incidents of substandard field investigation may result in suspension or revocation.

b. Repeated incidents of substandard, inaccurate or incomplete site cleanup reports and failure to follow site cleanup report instructions may result in suspension or revocation.

c. Conduct warranting a sanction after prior suspension shall result in a more severe sanction.

134.4(5) *Disciplinary procedure.*

a. Prior to issuance of a final department action imposing a disciplinary sanction of suspension, revocation or denial of certification, the department shall conduct such lawful investigation as it deems necessary to substantiate material facts sufficient to warrant a disciplinary sanction. The decision to impose a disciplinary sanction shall be made by the administrator of the environmental protection division.

b. Written notice of a sanction shall be sent by restricted certified mail to the person against whom the sanction is imposed. The notice shall provide a brief explanation of the facts relied upon and the sanction to be imposed. The notice shall inform the recipient of applicable appeal rights.

c. A person may appeal a decision imposing a suspension, revocation or denial of certification within 30 days of receipt of the notice. Upon timely receipt of the notice of appeal, contested case procedures, including informal settlement, shall apply as provided in 561—Chapter 7. In accordance with 561—subrule 7.5(2), the department shall initiate pleading by the filing of a petition.

d. Notwithstanding 561—subrule 7.15(7), the sanction imposed shall not take effect until after a contested case hearing and issuance of a proposed decision. If a timely appeal has not been filed, the sanction is effective after 30 days from receipt of the notice. A party may request stay of the sanction, as provided in 561—subrule 7.15(7), after issuance of a proposed decision.

134.4(6) *Noncompliance with support order procedures.* Upon receipt of a certification of noncompliance with a 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 a notice by restricted certified mail to the person of its intent to deny or suspend groundwater professional certification based on receipt of a certification 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 5625C, IAB 5/19/21, effective 6/23/21]