

# Operator Certification Practices

## Industrial/Commercial Wastewater Operator Certification Board of Examiners

Minor discharges with no treatment and limited monitoring requirements. This classification applies only to discharges where no other classification applies. Proper application for certification is required; the written examination consists of a take-home questionnaire.

The certification practices included below are a summary of selected actions by the Industrial/Commercial Wastewater Operator Certification Board of Examiners over many years. These serve as guidelines for staff of the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) Water Resources Division (WRD) Operator Certification Unit (Licensing and Technology Support Unit) regarding qualification of applicants for certification, the examination process, and certification renewal. This document is reviewed by the Board annually and updated as needed.

### Experience Qualifications

**Rule 256 (1)** The Board may recommend for certification, following an oral examination and such other examinations, including an evaluation of the applicant’s experience, as the board may require, persons with the following qualifications:

A minimum of six months **acceptable** operational experience in each classification requested is required to qualify for certification and must be attained by the date of the examination.

Acceptable Experience	Not Acceptable Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct operational (hands-on) experience.</li> <li>• Immediate supervision of operators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design.</li> <li>• Start-up.</li> <li>• Laboratory only.</li> <li>• Maintenance only.</li> </ul>

The following classifications are exceptions to this experience requirement:

- A-1i (Storm Water Management – Industrial).
- A1j (Storm Water Management – Construction).
- A1-A (Special Classification) – applications are considered individually.

### Municipal Experience

Experience gained while working at a municipal wastewater treatment facility may be accepted toward industrial/commercial wastewater certification if the applicant has experience with processes that are compatible with the industrial certifications requested. Staff may review and approve municipal experience and only those applications that are questionable need to come before the Board to review.

## Educational Qualifications

### **Rule 256 (1)(b) Minimum requirements – all types of classification No. 2:**

(i) The equivalent of high school education with the equivalent of high school chemistry.

### **Practice**

Courses submitted for approval as equivalent to high school chemistry will be evaluated by staff of the EGLE Operator Certification Unit and approved or disapproved based on the following criteria:

1. The course must apply directly to wastewater chemistry and/or analysis, and the operation of a wastewater laboratory.
2. The course must be at least two days (10 contact hours) in length.
3. Students must be present within ½ hour of class start time and be present for the entire class.
4. Students must successfully complete a course ending exam with a passing score of at least 70 percent.
5. Students passing the exam must be provided a certificate that indicates the name of the course, the name of the trainer and course provider, the name of the student, and the dates of the course.

Staff will maintain a list of all approved courses and report all newly approved courses to the Board of Examiners at the next scheduled meeting.

**Note:** Five years or more of acceptable experience in the two-level classification requested may also be considered equivalent to high school chemistry.

### **Rule 256 (1)(c) Minimum requirements – all types of classification No. 3:**

(i) The equivalent of two years of college education in engineering, chemistry, biological sciences or allied field. Graduation from high school and with at least four courses in post-high school level chemistry or biological sciences or both may be equivalent.

### **Practice**

Courses submitted for approval for three-level certification (acceptable to meet requirement for four post-high school courses) will be evaluated by staff of the WRD's Operator Certification Unit and approved or disapproved based on the following criteria:

1. The course must apply directly to the operation of a wastewater treatment process.
2. The course must be at least two days (10 contact hours) in length).
3. Students must be present within ½ hour of class start time and be present for the entire class.
4. Students must successfully complete a course ending exam with a passing score of at least 70 percent.
5. Students passing the exam must be provided a certificate that indicates the name of the course, the name of the student, and the dates of the course.

Staff will maintain a list of all approved courses and report all newly approved courses to the Board of Examiners at the next scheduled meeting.

## Online Exam and Renewal Application Submission Information

As of 2021, staff ask that all applications be submitted online. Examinees are expected to visit our website and download the fillable application, complete it, and email it to

[EGLE-WRD-OpCert@Michigan.gov](mailto:EGLE-WRD-OpCert@Michigan.gov).

Online credit card payment options are available for the exam fees and an updated invoice form is available for those who need to pay with a check or a money order. Even if a person is sending in a check or money order as payment, it is expected that they email their application or renewal information to us.

## Examination Requirements

### R 323.1255 Applications and Examinations:

**Rule 255 (1)** A person desiring to be certified in one or more of the classifications shall file an application with the commission at least 30 days before the established date of the examination on an application form provided by the commission. The information included therein shall constitute a part of the examination.

**Rule 255 (2)** The Board, shall, under the direction of the commission, examine applicants for certification in order to determine their ability and qualifications, at such times and places as it designates and in accordance with the provisions of these rules. Examinations shall be held at least annually. Sixty days' notice of the examination date shall be given. The Board, as a result of the examination and the requirements of the act, shall recommend to the commission the issuance or non-issuance of certificates.

## Practice

### Certification Examination Timeline

1. Examination date established.
2. Application deadline date established (at least 30 days before exam).
3. Examination announcement and application posted on website (at least 60 days before exam).
4. Board of Examiners meeting date set.
5. Board of Examiners meeting held.
6. Application amendment deadline date in office before Board meeting.
7. Applicants notified of examinations approved to write.
8. Examinations held.
9. Board of Examiners meeting held.
10. Examination results mailed to home address.

**Certification of Applicants for A-1a (Special Classification), A-1h (Non-Contact Cooling Water), A-1i (Industrial Storm Water) and A-1j (Construction Storm Water).**

Since these examinations are offered throughout the year, the Board of Examiners has authorized individual Board members to meet with staff to recommend for issuance by the Director of EGLE certifications for these eligible candidates. This authorization is established and re-established at the first scheduled Board meeting of the calendar year. New approval language is to be included in the agendas where the approval is taking place.

The Industrial Wastewater Board of Examiners authorizes one Board Member to meet with staff as needed to recommend for issuance A-1a, A-1h, A-1i, and A-1j certifications by the Director of the EGLE for those eligible candidates. This authorization is established and re-established at the first scheduled Board meeting of the calendar year.

**Rule 256. (2)** The Board may recommend for certification in an appropriate classification, without written examination, or with oral examinations at the Board’s option, persons having the following qualifications:

The long-standing policy has been to require all applicants to pass the written examination for each classification requested. However, each request for certification without examination will be addressed individually by the Board.

## **Certification Renewal**

**Rule 257 (1)** A certificate is valid for five years from the next July 1 after the date of issuance. On or after January 1 of the year in which a certificate expires, the certified person may apply for renewal thereof. The commission may waive reexamination if the certified operator’s operation record justifies such exceptions. Failure to apply for renewal shall result in termination of such certification. The commission shall notify the certified operator and the owner as to the action it has taken.

**Rule 257 (2)** If the certificate of an operator is not renewed within 30 days after its renewal date, the commission shall give notice of the nonrenewal to the owner and the operator and 30 days thereafter certification shall be terminated unless application for renewal has been received in the interim.

### **Timetable for Renewal Activity**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
January	Postcard is sent to home address of each operator whose certificate will expire in July of that year.
July 1	Operators who have not renewed will expire. Operators have 60 days to reclaim certification without reexamination.
August 1	Notice of nonrenewal is sent to employer and operator.
September 1	Certificates are terminated for all operators who have not submitted a renewal application.

## Procedures for Meetings without Quorum

### Pre-exam meeting

Operator examination applications will be evaluated at the next scheduled meeting. Examination of operators will run a schedule across the state.

### Post-exam meeting

Pursuant to Rule 323.1255(2) promulgated pursuant to Part 31, Water Resources Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended. Board action is not necessary for application approval, but it is required for issuance of certifications.

---

EGLE does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, disability, political beliefs, height, weight, genetic information, or sexual orientation in the administration of any of its programs or activities, and prohibits intimidation and retaliation, as required by applicable laws and regulations.

To request this material in an alternate format, contact [EGLE-Accessibility@Michigan.gov](mailto:EGLE-Accessibility@Michigan.gov) or 800-662-9278.