



# The Certified Operator

*Operator Certification Program Information for Waterworks and Wastewater Operators.  
Published by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources*

## A NOTE FROM THE OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

It has been a little over two and a half years since I have taken on the position of operator certification coordinator, and it continues to be a pleasure working with operators and trainers. I have met many of you at events and have spoken to even more of you on the phone. I appreciate all the work you do to protect the waters in our state and ensure that citizens have safe drinking water. I am impressed by your dedication and commitment to your work.

The weather this past year has been challenging to say the least, with the long bitterly cold winter and the strong storms in the summer. Continuing education credits for your certification renewal was probably one of the last things on your mind during those difficult months. However, I hope you have had a chance to view and use some of our new online tools that were built to make the renewal process easier for operators. Our new training calendar was launched in

August 2013 with the hope that it will be easier for operators to find approved training in their part of the state. In June 2013, we introduced the Operator Certification Lookup Webpage. Operators can track their certification expiration date, print a wallet card, and view their training history on this handy site. Lastly, as of January 1, 2014, operators no longer have to obtain a paper credit slip at training events and keep them for up to 3 years. Instead, training providers submit attendance rosters directly to the DNR, and operators can view their training history online to track their credits. For more details on all of these enhancements, please see the articles inside this newsletter or view our website.

A big change coming in the next year for *wastewater* operators is the revised Wisconsin Administrative Code NR114. In 2010, Jack Saltes, a longtime DNR wastewater operations engineer,

gathered a workgroup consisting of operators, training providers, and WWOA and WRWA representatives with the goal of improving our wastewater operator certification program. Over the past several years, they have been working on revising the administrative rule to take into account new treatment technologies and to allow operators more flexibility in obtaining advanced level certification. They have also incorporated the new wastewater operator apprenticeship program into these rules, as a way to obtain advanced certification points.

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### UPCOMING EXAM DATES

**Wednesday, November 5th - Deadline to apply Oct. 8, 2014**

**Wednesday, May 6th - Deadline to apply April 8, 2015**

Exam applications are mailed to operators who have taken an exam in the last year and a half. Download an application at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/> Keywords: "Operator Certification"

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After several years of hard work, **the new Wisconsin Administrative Code NR114 was officially published on July 1, 2014. It will take effect a year from that date on July 1, 2015. I highly recommended that wastewater operators view the grandfathering information within this newsletter or on our website, in order to know how their certification will transfer with the new system.** The DNR engineer assigned to your wastewater treatment

plant can help answer any questions regarding how your facility's classification and subclasses may change.

There were many changes over the last year and more coming up this year, but I am confident that they will make for a better Operator Certification Program. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I am always happy to help.

**Lisa Bushby may be reached by:**  
**E-mail: [DNROpCert@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNROpCert@Wisconsin.gov)**  
**Phone: (608) 266-0498**



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## **ATTENTION WASTEWATER OPERATORS: NR 114 GRANDFATHERING INFORMATION**

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The revised Administrative Rule NR114 was published on July 1, 2014. **These revisions take effect on July 1, 2015, a year from the publish date.** All certified wastewater operators will be grandfathered into the new system based on their grade level and subclasses at the time the revised code takes effect on July 1, 2015. New certificates reflecting the new subclasses and grade levels will be mailed to all operators at that time. Operators may review the grandfathering information below to see how their certification will transfer to the new system.

### **How operator grade levels will be converted:**

**Grade T subclasses** will convert to **Operator-in-Training**. One year of subclass-specific experience will still be required to move above Operator-in-Training.

**Grade 1 and Grade 2 subclasses** will convert to the **Basic Level**, except if one or more other subclasses are at Grade 3 or Grade 4.

**Grade 3 and Grade 4 subclasses:** If an operator has Grade 3 or Grade 4 in any subclass, except Special K and Electroplating/Metal Finishing, all subclasses Grade 1 and higher will convert to the **Advanced Level**. The operator will receive their "10 points" towards Advanced Certification.

**If the operator has passed advanced level exams and has enough experience to be at Grade 3 or Grade 4, but has not submitted an experience form, they must submit that form before July 1, 2015 to ensure transfer to the Advanced level.** If an operator's certification does not convert to the advanced level, they can apply for advanced certification at a later date using the new advanced point system.

More information about the revisions is available on the Operator Certification Website at:  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/regulations/opcert/news.html>

The experience form is also available on the Operator Certification Website:  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/regulations/opcert/forms.html>

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**THE CERTIFIED OPERATOR**

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**HOW OPERATOR SUBCLASSES WILL BE CONVERTED**

Old Description	Old Subclass		New Description	New Subclass
Primary Settling	A	→	Solids Separation	B
Trickling Filters and RBCs	B	→	Biological Treatment - Attached Growth	A2
		→	Solids Separation	B
		→	Biological Solids/Sludge Handling and Processing	C
Activated Sludge	C	→	Biological Treatment - Suspended Growth	A1
		→	Solids Separation	B
		→	Biological Solids/Sludge Handling and Processing	C
Stabilization Ponds and Aerated Lagoons	D	→	Ponds, Lagoons and Natural Systems	A4
Disinfection	E	→	Disinfection	D
Anaerobic Digestion	F	→	Biological Solids/Sludge Handling and Processing	C
Mechanical Sludge Dewatering	G	→	Biological Solids/Sludge Handling and Processing	C
Filtration	H	→	Solids Separation	B
Phosphorus Removal	I	→	Nutrient Removal – Total Phosphorus	P
Laboratory	J	→	Laboratory	L
Special K	K	→	Unique Treatment Process or Recirculating Media Filters	U or A3
Electroplating/Metal Finishing	L	→	Unique Treatment Process	U

**ADVANCED CERTIFICATION\***

Work Experience (1pt/yr)		4-6
4 Yr Undergraduate or Graduate College Degree		6
2 Yr Water/Wastewater Associates Degree		6
State Approved Apprenticeship Program		6
Advanced Multiple Choice 100 Q&A Exam		4
Advanced Courses	minimum 80 hrs	2
	minimum 60 hrs	1.5
	minimum 40 hrs	1
	minimum 20 hrs	0.5
		<b>10</b>

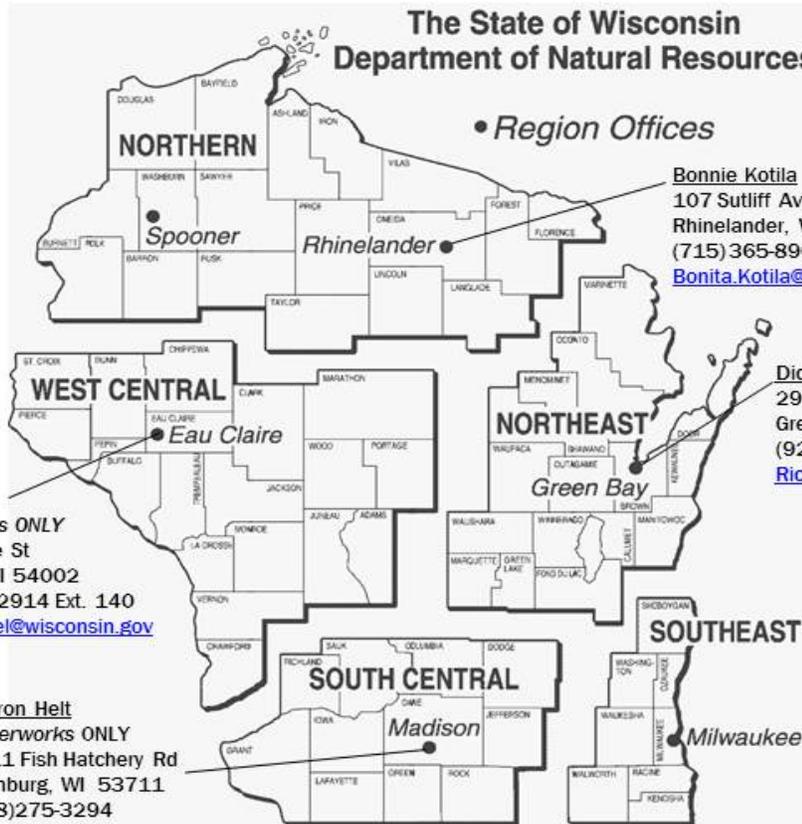
*A Quote From Jack Saltes, DNR Wastewater Engineer:*  
*“Progressively and uniquely, Wisc. Adm. Code NR 114 ushers in a new era of wastewater treatment plant operator certification, especially advanced certification. A new operator cafeteria will be opening next summer (2015) for a new generation of wastewater professionals. Step up-to the education and experience buffet, and select what goes on your advanced certification plate. Experience? Education? Exam? Classes? Your choices for your upscale (advanced) dining experience (points)! Hope you like the new buffet.”*

\* A total of 10 points will be required to obtain advanced certification, with a minimum 4 out of 10 points obtained through work experience.

# REGIONAL COORDINATORS



## Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Waterworks & Wastewater Operator Certification Regional Coordinators



**Bonnie Kotila**  
107 Sutliff Ave  
Rhineland, WI 54501  
(715) 365-8907  
[Bonita.Kotila@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Bonita.Kotila@wisconsin.gov)

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Green Bay, WI 54313  
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[Richard.Sachs@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Richard.Sachs@wisconsin.gov)

**Jan Engel**  
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890 Spruce St  
Baldwin, WI 54002  
(715) 684-2914 Ext. 140  
[Janice.Engel@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Janice.Engel@wisconsin.gov)

**Sharon Helt**  
Waterworks ONLY  
3911 Fish Hatchery Rd  
Fitchburg, WI 53711  
(608) 275-3294  
[Sharon.Helt@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Sharon.Helt@Wisconsin.gov)

Wastewater and Waterworks Operators within the Southeastern Region, and  
Wastewater Operators in the West Central and South Central Regions contact:

**Lisa Bushby, Operator Certification Program Coordinator**  
PO Box 7921, Madison WI 53707-7921  
608-266-0498  
[Lisa.Bushby@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Lisa.Bushby@wisconsin.gov)

For general questions, e-mail the Operator Certification Mailbox at:  
[DNROpCert@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNROpCert@wisconsin.gov)

### Veterans Fee Waiver Program

Veterans may apply for a one-time fee waiver to be used towards exam fees.  
Visit the DNR Operator Certification Forms & Applications Web Page for more information.

[dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) Keywords "Operator Certification"



## SPOTLIGHT ON NEW STAFF



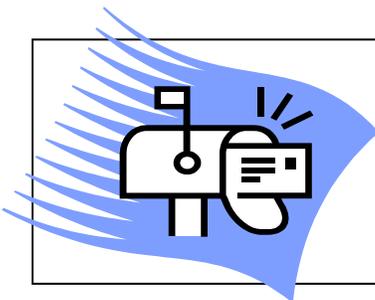
*Hi, I'm Steve Geis.* I joined the DNR as the **Section Chief** for Laboratory Certification, Operator Certification, and Laboratory Services in December of 2013. Prior to that, I was a Chemist Supervisor at the State Lab of Hygiene. I was the first employee of the new Environmental Toxicology Lab (Whole Effluent Toxicity Testing) 26 years ago, and for the past 10 years served as the Supervisor of both that lab and the Organic Chemistry section. I have a Master's degree in Water Chemistry from UW-Madison and my B.S. degree is in Water Chemistry from UW-Stevens Point.

*Hello my name is Sharon Helt* and I just became the **Regional Coordinator** for Waterworks Operator Certification in South Central Region in June of this year. I have worked for the Department of Natural Resources for 37 years. I have worked in the Drinking & Groundwater program for the past 22 years as an Environmental Program Associate. I work closely with Public Water Supply Engineers and Specialists implementing the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) regulations. I am usually the first point of contact when systems have unsafe bacteria samples and guide them in helping the system return to having safe water. I am looking forward to my new role. So if you have any questions, please give me a call.



*Hi, I'm Danielle Luke,* the new **Wastewater Support Specialist**. I primarily work on implementing the NR 114 wastewater treatment plant operator rule revisions. I also provide support for CMOM guidance and training as well as Compliance Maintenance Annual Reports (CMARs). I am a grade 4 certified wastewater operator in eight subclasses with an Associate Degree in Environmental Science-Natural Resources from Fox Valley Technical College. After graduating from Fox Valley Tech in 2009, I worked as a wastewater operator at both industrial and municipal wastewater treatment facilities. In addition to my position with the DNR, I am returning to college for a Bachelor's Degree in Waste Management from UW-Stevens Point.

*Hello everyone, my name is Amy Dubruiel.* I am a **Program Assistant** with the Operator Certification Program. I am stationed in Madison, and from there I work on operator renewals, training attendance forms, and exam applications, among other duties. I have greatly enjoyed interacting with operators and learning about the technical knowledge associated with being a wastewater, municipal waterworks, and small water system operator.



### **Employment or Address Changes Reminder:**

If you change employment, ask your facility to notify your DNR representative of any personnel changes. Contact your regional coordinator (page 4) if you have a change in mailing or email address. Current contact information helps get important updates and reminders to you in a timely manner.

# ARE YOU TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW ONLINE FEATURES?

Over the past year, the Operator Certification Program has been busy making enhancements to increase efficiency and improve customer service to operators and training providers. Please visit our website to use our new Operator Certification Look-up website and our new Training Calendar.

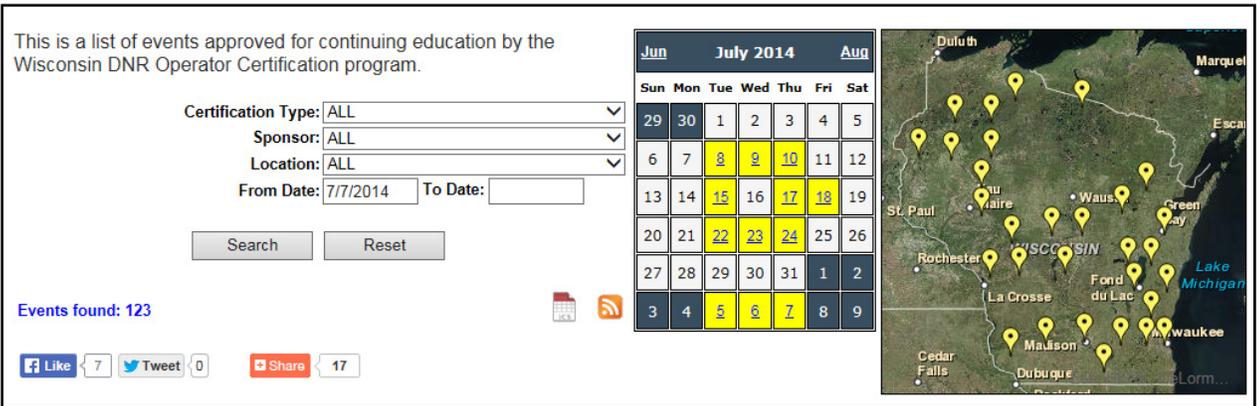
Our website is:  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/regulations/opcert> -OR-

You may start at the DNR homepage  
<http://dnr.wi.gov> and search keywords  
“Operator Certification”

The Operator Certification Look-up Webpage



An operator’s information can be searched for by either name or certification number. The search results will display the operator’s name, certification number, certification type held (subclasses and grade levels), and the certification expiration date. There is also a link to print a wallet card, so that an operator can always have their certification number handy when attending training events. Secondly, there is a link to the operator’s training history report. Any training that the operator has taken since January 1, 2014, the date the DNR implemented electronic tracking of credits, will show up on that report.



The Training Calendar

Our new and improved training calendar makes it easier for operators to find relevant training in their part of the state. Any training that is pre-approved by the Operator Certification Program will be listed on this calendar. An operator can filter by certification type, training sponsor, county, or search within a specific date range. The map of Wisconsin on the right shows where training is located around the state. If an operator clicks on the pin, all training in that selected county will be displayed.

**For an up-to-date calendar of training events, please visit our online training calendar:**  
<http://dnr.wi.gov/regulations/opcert/training.html>

## ELECTRONIC TRACKING OF CREDITS

The Operator Certification Program has been receiving good feedback on our new electronic tracking of credits that began January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year! Many operators have already renewed their certification with the new system.

Here is how the new system works for those who have not yet renewed with the new system: Six weeks before an operator's certification expiration date, operators will receive a renewal reminder

letter via postal mail, same as usual. At that time, the operator may mail in any paper credit slips from training prior to January 1, 2014. If the operator has taken any training after January 1, 2014, then they should print their training history report (available on the Operator Certification Lookup Webpage), sign the report to certify their attendance, and mail that in with the renewal. The \$45 renewal fee can be paid by check or money order.

The Operator Certification Program anticipates a future phase of this project that will be a complete online renewal system. Operators will be able to certify their attendance electronically with an e-signature and pay with either a credit card or e-check. This future phase will be several years out, once operators have used all remaining credits slips from training conducted prior to January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.



## HOW-TO REPORT HEALTH AND SAFETY CREDITS

Per WI Administrative Code NR 114, a **max. of 6 hours of health and safety** related training may be used per renewal period. Examples of health and safety related training include First Aid, CPR training, Confined Space Entry, Excavation Safety, blood borne pathogens, and hazardous plant chemicals

To receive credit for health and safety training that isn't reported directly to the DNR by the training provider, the **Operator Training**

**Report Form**, available on the Operator Certification Forms webpage, must be completed. More than one operator can be listed on the form, if they all took the same training course.

**All training report forms must be accompanied by a proof of attendance.** Examples of proof of attendance include: a certificate of completion, a copy of a First aid/CPR card, or a copy of the sign-in sheet.



### Waterworks Study Materials Available for Loan at Wisconsin's Water Library!

California State University Sacramento, Field Study Training Program Guides:

- Water Distribution System Operation and Maintenance*, 6th Edition
- Water Treatment Plant Operation*, Vol. I & II 6th Edition
- Small Water System Operation and Maintenance*, 5th Edition

Visit <http://aqua.wisc.edu/waterlibrary/> to learn more.

## ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

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**Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC)**, Green Bay Campus, Green Bay WI  
*Environmental Engineering Waste and Water Technology*

**Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC)**, Mequon Campus, Mequon WI  
*Environmental Health and Water Quality Technology A.A.S. Degree*

**Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC)**, Fond du Lac, WI  
*Water Quality Technology A.A.S. Degree, Online Only*

**Bay College**, Escanaba Campus, Escanaba MI  
*Water Resource Management A.A.S. Degree*

**Lewis and Clark Community College**, Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville Environmental Resource Training Center, Edwardsville IL  
*Environmental Treatment Technologies—Water Treatment A.A.S. Degree*

## ONLINE AND CORRESPONDENCE TRAINING

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The following links provide information on available training sources. These links are not the only source for this type of information and are provided solely as a courtesy.

Once you finish a course, save a copy of the certificate of completion, fill out a Operator Training Report Form (available on the Operator Certification website) and submit both to the Operator Certification Program. The one exception to this procedure is for RoyCEU, which submits attendance lists directly to the DNR on a monthly basis. RoyCEU credits will display on your Training History Report.

California State University - Sacramento      MW/WW      [www.owp.csus.edu/courses.php](http://www.owp.csus.edu/courses.php)  
Several 18 hour online courses, as well as longer correspondence courses.

Wisconsin Rural Water Association (WRWA)      MW/WW      [www.wrwa.org](http://www.wrwa.org)  
Partners with CEU Plan to offer a number of courses ranging from 1 to 6 hours.

Technical Learning College      MW/WW      [www.tlch20.com](http://www.tlch20.com)

360Water.com      MW/WW      [www.360water.com](http://www.360water.com)

AWWA Online Institute      MW      [www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org)

Water Environment Federation (WEF)      MW/WW      [www.wef.org](http://www.wef.org)

At Your Pace Online      MW      [www.aypotech.com](http://www.aypotech.com)

RoyCEU.com      MW/WW      [www.royceu.com](http://www.royceu.com)

MW= Municipal Waterworks  WW=Wastewater
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### Other Links of Interest

**SmallWaterSupply.org** is a free service to support water and wastewater operators with comprehensive resources and information in one easy-to-use place. The website contains a searchable document library, a forum, and a blog. You may also sign up for their weekly newsletter.

<http://smallwatersupply.org/>

**UW Water Resource Library** offers technical manuals available via inter-library loan, including the Sacramento Manuals: <http://aqua.wisc.edu/Waterlibrary/>

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## TRAINING PROVIDER CONTACTS

CSWEA	Central States Water Environmental Association -Wisconsin Section <a href="http://www.cswea.org/wisconsin/">http://www.cswea.org/wisconsin/</a>
FET	Federation of Environmental Technologists, Inc. <a href="http://www.fetinc.org/">http://www.fetinc.org/</a> (262) 437-1700
MATC	Milwaukee Area Technical College – Mequon Campus Kathy Bates, Instructor, (262) 238-2264 or <a href="mailto:batesks@matc.edu">batesks@matc.edu</a> <a href="http://www.matc.edu/student/offerings/environmentalhealth.cfm">http://www.matc.edu/student/offerings/environmentalhealth.cfm</a>
MPTC	Moraine Park Technical College Kathy Hass, (920) 924-6436 or <a href="mailto:khass@morainepark.edu">khass@morainepark.edu</a> Register by Calling: 800-472-4554 Visit MPTC's website: <a href="http://www.morainepark.edu/watercert">http://www.morainepark.edu/watercert</a>
NEW Works	NEW Works by Mahattil (262)671-4291 or <a href="mailto:water@mahattil.com">water@mahattil.com</a> <a href="http://www.mahattil.com/learn.html">http://www.mahattil.com/learn.html</a>
NWTC	Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Laura Gerold, <a href="mailto:laura.gerold@nwtc.edu">laura.gerold@nwtc.edu</a> or (920) 498-5437 <a href="http://www.nwtc.edu/academics/degrees/Pages/EnvironmentalEngineering.aspx">http://www.nwtc.edu/academics/degrees/Pages/EnvironmentalEngineering.aspx</a>
UW-EPD	University of Wisconsin - Engineering Professional Development (800) 462-0876 <a href="http://epdweb.engr.wisc.edu/">http://epdweb.engr.wisc.edu/</a>
WASTEWATER TRAINING SOLUTIONS	Dan Tomaro, (608) 770-5144 <a href="http://www.wastewatertrainingsolutions.com">http://www.wastewatertrainingsolutions.com</a>
WRWA	Wisconsin Rural Water Association (715) 344-7778 <a href="http://www.wrwa.org/">http://www.wrwa.org/</a>
WWA	Wisconsin Water Association Jill Duchniak, Member Services Coordinator, <a href="mailto:jill@wiawwa.org">jill@wiawwa.org</a> or (414) 423-7000 <a href="http://www.wiawwa.org">http://www.wiawwa.org</a>
WWOA	Wisconsin Wastewater Operators Association Karen Harter, WWOA Executive Secretary <a href="mailto:secretary@wwoa.org">secretary@wwoa.org</a> or (608) 355-3081 <a href="http://www.wwoa.org/">http://www.wwoa.org/</a>

### Wastewater Operator Apprenticeship Program

Are you, or your employee, new to wastewater treatment and looking for a way to further your knowledge on this field? Want to take wastewater classes while will earning an income and on-the-job experience?

Contact the Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards at:

Website: <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/apprenticeship/>

Phone: (608) 266-3332



## DNR OFFERS LAB EXAM REVIEW COURSES

These courses are designed to help operators prepare for the Lab Intro and Lab Advanced exams. Course content is based on the DNR study guides, with input from the experienced instructors. Operators will be granted 6 wastewater operator credits for each completed course. Morning refreshments will be provided; operators must find lunch on their own.



*Rick Mealy (L) and George Bowman (R), Wisconsin DNR, are co-instructors for the courses*

**Intro Level Exam Review:** Thursday, October 23rd, 2014  
8:30 am – 3:30 pm

**Advanced Level Exam Review:** Friday, October 24th, 2014  
8:30 am – 3:30 pm

**Location:** American Family Training Center, Near Interstate 90/94/39, Madison, WI

**Cost:** \$25 for each day

**Questions:** Contact Lisa Bushby at 608-266-0498

**Deadline to apply is October 15th.**

Operators will receive an email confirming their registration, as well as directions to the location of the training. Please make check or money order payable to the DNR (\$25 for each day). Submit payment along with this registration form to:

DNR  
Operator Certification Program SS/7  
PO Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

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**Registration Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Wastewater Operator Certification Number (if a certified operator): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

I am registering for:    \_\_\_ Lab Intro Exam Review: Thursday, October 23rd  
                                  \_\_\_ Lab Advanced Exam Review: Friday, October 24th





Presorted Standard  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Madison, WI  
Permit No. 906

Wisconsin DNR  
Operator Certification Program  
PO Box 7921  
Madison, WI 53707-7921

**This newsletter is available electronically.**

*The Certified Operator* was e-mailed to all operators with email addresses on file. If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please provide your name, certification number, and email address to [DNROpCert@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNROpCert@Wisconsin.gov)

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## UPCOMING EXAM DATES

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**Wednesday, November 5th - Deadline to apply October 8, 2014**

**Wednesday, May 6th - Deadline to apply April 8, 2015**

Exam applications are mailed to operators who have taken an exam in the last year and a half. Exam applications are available on our website.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/> Keyword Search: "Operator Certification"

## CONGRATULATIONS

At the May 7th, 2014 exams, 88 *new* municipal waterworks and 93 *new* wastewater operators became certified. Congratulations to all the new certified operators and to operators that added a new subclass to their certification!

**This newsletter is sent to all active certified operators that we have on file.**