

Policies of the WaterOperator.org Continuing Education Training Program at the Illinois State Water Survey

Version 2.0 | Updated October 2023

Mission Statement

WaterOperator.org aggregates the best resources on the web for water and wastewater operators in a free, user-friendly location. The program is a collaboration between the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, with funding from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency. Our home base is the Illinois State Water Survey, but we serve a national audience.

Our core function is helping water industry professionals get easy access to training events and downloadable materials. As such, we do not consider ourselves a traditional training provider. However, our experience with indexing more than 11,000 training event each year led to identifying several gaps that we have chosen to serve with our online asynchronous and live training.

Instructor Criteria

WaterOperator.org works with employees of the Illinois State Water Survey or the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (and their regional affiliates) to develop continuing education materials and host live training events. From time to time additional outside experts, such as state regulators, technical assistance providers, or engineers are tapped to provide review, input, or answer questions on live webinars, but our core program is run on our own in-house expertise.

Record Keeping

All continuing education records are maintained for a period of no less than seven years on a University of Illinois Box.com enterprise account. Certification officers may email info@wateroperator.org to request attendance rosters or other verification, if not required by policy to submit by a certain date. Additionally, updated certificates can be provided to students in locations where the certification entity requires additional information, such as a course number or operator number on the certificate. State-by-state (or other entity) instructions are provided for each course.

Records that will be retained include, but are not limited to:

- A. Individual session records that include the following:
 - a. the list of instructors who taught each session on each date that the session was offered and the subject areas they presented, as well as which instructor was considered to be the lead instructor and those sponsor representative(s) that functioned as the facilitator (if applicable);

- b. the name of the instructor(s) and facilitator(s) who proctored and/or graded the examination for each session;
 - c. the attendance sign-in sheet(s) for each session;
 - d. all graded and dated validated examination answer sheets (if applicable) for each examination attempt including an explanation for any retests as well as a narrative explaining any assistance provided to the attendee before the re-test; and
 - e. session evaluation forms or equivalent compilation/summary.
- B. Sponsor file with the following documentation:
- a. a copy of all documents that substantiate the director's efforts in upholding the duties outlined in our director attestation letter;
 - b. a copy of the department's approval letter for each specific session;
 - c. a description of the procedure used to notify the department in writing of any changes in any aspect of a session before implementing such change;
 - d. copies of the application form and all session materials submitted to the department as part of the original submission;
 - e. copies of all revisions to the session, with the correspondence approving such revisions;
 - f. copies of all instructors' resumes, directors' attestations and credentials as well as the documents issued by the sponsor designating each instructor;
 - g. copies of examination questions for each session offered (if applicable); and
 - h. the names of the designated lead instructor(s) and any other instructor(s) designated to teach the specified subject of the session and their qualifications which must include documented relevant educational background, work experience, and training in the following form:
 - i. official academic transcripts (certification training only) or completion certificate from an environmental train-the-trainer session; and/or
 - ii. either a resume, letter of reference, documentation of work experience, or a copy of the signed statement of employment.

Learning Management Systems

We use Thinkific to deliver and track completion of asynchronous training. Completion of each lesson is a prerequisite to move on to the next lesson. Additionally each video in a course is tracked, has no play bar (to prevent skipping), and requires 100% completion to continue to the next content item. Thinkific automatically generates a certificate upon successful completion of the final exam, as well as provides real-time progress of each student that can be verified at any time. Additionally, we use GoToWebinar to accept webinar registrations, collect webinar attendance records, and manage live polling responses. Any new platforms employed for use in our continuing education training program would be required to have the same or greater levels of participant tracking.