

**333-061-0235**

**Operator Certification Requirements, Levels 1-4**

Operator certification, as specified in this rule, corresponds to each of the levels of water system facility classification specified in OAR 333-061-0220(2) through (4).

- (1) To receive certification as specified in this rule, applicants must:
  - (a) Provide proof of, including the date of graduation or completion, a high school diploma, GED, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or PhD; and
  - (b) Successfully complete an examination for the level and type of certification sought by the applicant.
- (2) Minimum qualifications for water treatment (WT) or water distribution (WD) operator certification are identified in Table 46. Experience or a combination of experience and education is required depending on the certification and level sought. For the purposes of this rule, "post high school education" means that education acquired through programs such as short schools, correspondence courses, trade schools, colleges, universities, formalized workshops or seminars that are acceptable to the Authority and for which college or continuing education credit is issued by the training sponsor.

Table 46

Certification Type and Level of Certification	Required Combination of Experience and Post High School Education		Operational Decision-Making Experience Required <sup>3</sup>
	Experience <sup>1</sup>	Education <sup>2</sup>	
WD or WT level 1	12 months	None	None
	None	12-month certificate or associate's degree in an Authority-approved water and environmental technology program	None
WD or WT level 2	36 months	None	None
	24 months	12 months	None
WD or WT level 3	96 months	None	30 months
	60 months	12 months	30 months
	48 months	24 months	24 months
	36 months	36 months	18 months
WD or WT level 4	120 months	None	36 months
	84 months	12 months	30 months
	72 months	24 months	30 months
	60 months	36 months	30 months
	48 months	48 months	24 months

<sup>1</sup> Months of work experience required, as specified in OAR 333-061-0235(2)(a).

<sup>2</sup> Months of education required, as a substitution for work experience, as specified by OAR 333-061-0235(2)(b).

<sup>3</sup> Months of operational decision-making experience required, as specified in OAR 333-061-0235(4). This experience may also count as general work experience.

- (a) Operating experience must have been gained through direct, “hands-on” operation of water system facilities and includes, but is not limited to, decisions related to water quality or quantity that may affect public health. Knowledge gained from the performance of duties as an official, inspector, manager, engineer, or director of public works, and that does not include the actual operation or supervision of water system facilities, does not qualify an individual for certification as prescribed by these rules.
  - (A) For water distribution certification, experience in one of the following fields may be accepted, not to exceed one-half of the total experience required: wastewater collection; water treatment; cross connection control; and industrial or commercial process water treatment.
  - (B) For water treatment certification, experience in one of the following fields may be accepted, not to exceed one-half of the total experience required: wastewater treatment; wastewater treatment laboratory; water distribution; and industrial or commercial process water treatment.
  - (C) One year of experience is equivalent to 12 months of full-time employment with 100 percent of the individual’s time dedicated to activities directly related to the certification for which they are applying.
  - (D) Operating experience earned at a water treatment plant or distribution system is considered qualifying experience for certification up to one classification level higher than that of the water system facility where the experience was earned.
- (b) The Authority may, at its discretion, permit the substitution of post high school education for experience. Acceptable fields of study include, but are not limited to: allied sciences, chemistry, engineering, industrial or commercial water processing, wastewater collection, wastewater treatment plant operations, wastewater laboratory analysis, water distribution, and water treatment plant operations.
  - (A) Substituted education may not exceed one-half of the experience required for the certification and level sought except for level 1 certification, where an Authority-approved certificate or degree can substitute for all the required operating experience.
  - (B) Any degree or accumulation of college credit hours must be from an educational institution accredited through an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
  - (C) The following are considered equivalent to 12 months of post high school education:
    - (i) One year of college education;
    - (ii) Thirty semester hours of college education;
    - (iii) Forty-five quarter hours of college education; or
    - (iv) Forty-five CEUs.
  - (D) College credits and post high school education from other sources may be combined to total 45 CEU.

- (3) Individuals may request credit for on-the-job training as either experience or education, but not both.
- (4) Individuals seeking certification at water distribution and water treatment levels 3 and 4 must possess operational decision-making experience as defined in OAR 333-061-0020(87). Any work experience as specified in subsection (2)(a) of this rule qualifies as operational decision-making experience if it meets the criteria specified in OAR 333-061-0020(87).
- (5) To qualify for filtration endorsement certification, as prescribed by OAR 333-061-0220(4), individuals must:
  - (a) Possess WT Level 2 certification;
  - (b) Have one year of operational decision-making experience at a water treatment plant utilizing conventional or direct filtration treatment; and
  - (c) Successfully pass a filtration endorsement examination.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 448.131 & 448.450

Stats. Implemented: ORS 448.450 & 448.455