

**Illinois Environmental Protection
Agency
Division of Water Pollution Control**

**WASTEWATER OPERATOR
CERTIFICATION and STUDY GUIDE**

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**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Division of Water Pollution Control Wastewater
Operator Certification & Study Guide**

The purpose of this guide is to provide information about the wastewater operator certification program. For ease of use, this guide is divided into the following sections:

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FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

1. Is the wastewater operator certification program mandatory or voluntary?

The **wastewater operator certification program** is a **mandatory** program. This means that each wastewater treatment facility in Illinois is required to be operated by a wastewater operator who is certified at or above the certification level required for the treatment facility. However, a **voluntary** certification program for **collection system operators** has been implemented. Since this is a voluntary program, it means that a certified collection system operator is not required to operate a collection system, although it is strongly recommended by the Agency.

2. How are wastewater treatment facilities classified in Illinois?

Wastewater treatment facilities are classified as either domestic or industrial facilities.

Municipal wastewater treatment facilities are classified in one of four groups as follows:

- Group 4 - Lagoon treatment systems. Group 4 facilities require a wastewater operator certified at the Class 4 or higher level (Class 3, Class 2, or Class 1).
- Group 3 - Fixed film processes and Imhoff tank systems with a design average flow (DAF) of less than 1.0 MGD, and all primary treatment systems. Group 3 facilities require a wastewater operator certified at the Class 3 or higher level (Class 2, or Class 1).
- Group 2 - Activated sludge systems with a design average flow (DAF) of less than 1.0 MGD. Group 2 facilities require a wastewater operator certified at the Class 2 or higher level (Class 1).
- Group 1 - All domestic wastewater treatment systems 1.0 MGD DAF or more, excluding lagoon systems and primary treatment systems. Group 1 facilities require a wastewater operator certified at the Class 1 level.

- Group K - Industrial wastewater treatment facilities require Class K certified wastewater operators. Group K facilities shall consist of industrial wastewater treatment works, pretreatment works, domestic wastewater treatment works owned and operated by industries, and spray irrigation that is collected and discharged.

3. What are the wastewater operator certification levels available in Illinois?

Municipal: Class 4 (lowest level)
 Class 3
 Class 2
 Class 1 (highest level)

Industrial (Class K): Facility-Specific
(Class K-WR): General (Water Remediation)

Operator-In-Training: Basic
 Intermediate
 Advanced

Collection System Operator

4. What are the eligibility requirements for each certification level?

Class 4: 1-year wastewater operating experience

Class 3: 3 years' wastewater operating experience **and** high school education or equivalent

Class 2: 6 years' wastewater operating experience **and** high school education or equivalent

Class 1: 8 years' wastewater operating experience **and** high school education or equivalent

Class K: Active supervision and/or operation of an industrial wastewater treatment facility

Operator-In-Training Basic: 3 months' wastewater operating experience **or** 1 wastewater course

Operator-In-Training Intermediate: 1-year wastewater operating experience

Operator-In-Training Advanced: 3 years' wastewater operating experience **and** high school education or equivalent

Collection System Operator: 1-year collection system operating experience **and** high school education or equivalent

5. Are there any substitutions that can be used to help satisfy the eligibility requirements?

Yes, for the Class 3, Class 2, and Class 1 certification levels, up to 50% of the total requirement may be combined credit received for completed wastewater courses, college credits, and related collection system or public water supply operating experience.

The Class 4 level receives 3 months' substitution credit for a high school diploma or GED, and up to 6 months' credit for wastewater courses. The only time college credit can be applied toward Class 4 eligibility is upon the successful completion of a one-year college program specifically designed for wastewater treatment works operation, which includes actual operation of a wastewater treatment works, and may be substituted for a maximum of one-year wastewater operator experience, such as with the program offered through ERTC at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

For collection system operator certification, 3 months' substitution credit for high school diploma or GED and up to 6 months credit may be granted for completion of collection system courses and/or wastewater courses, and/or for wastewater operating experience, or any combination of substitute credits, not to exceed 6 months.

6. What is a wastewater operator?

A wastewater operator is a person who regularly makes recommendations or is responsible for process control decisions at a wastewater treatment facility. The term does not apply to persons whose duties are limited solely to laboratory testing or maintenance, or to other persons who exercise general or indirect supervision only.

7. What is wastewater operating experience?

Wastewater operating experience is time spent performing the hands-on operational duties of a wastewater treatment works operator, which includes direct hands-on physical operation of wastewater treatment equipment and/or wastewater treatment processes, direct active field supervision of wastewater treatment equipment and/or wastewater treatment processes, and/or direct and active involvement in process control decisions for wastewater treatment processes. At this time, wastewater operator experience may be acquired at either municipal or industrial wastewater treatment facilities.

8. What does NOT count as hands-on wastewater operating experience?

Public works, street maintenance, meter reading, operating a Vactor truck, sludge hauling/handling and/or application, janitorial, grounds keeping, collection systems and/or drinking water operations, laboratory testing, electrical and/or maintenance mechanic work.

9. What is related experience?

Related experience is experience operating collection systems or drinking water supplies or laboratory or maintenance experience at a wastewater treatment facility. Partial credit toward eligibility will be given once hands-on wastewater operating experience is obtained.

10. What is a wastewater course?

A wastewater course is defined as a course consisting of 3 quarter hours, or 2 semester hours, or 30 contact hours, or 3.0 continuing education units (CEUs) and must cover one or more aspects of wastewater treatment such as wastewater collection, treatment, operations, maintenance, or management from an accredited college, university, or technical vocational and trade school that is approved by the Agency. Training events that meet this definition will receive 3 months of credit toward the certification eligibility requirements. Training events which do not meet this definition will receive credit at the same rate as college/university courses.

The amount of credit that may be given for wastewater courses is dependent on the level of certification being sought. The maximum credit for wastewater courses per certification level is given below. Any wastewater courses which cannot be credited at the 3 month rate will be credited at the same rate as college university courses.

<u>Certification Level</u>	<u>Maximum Credit for Wastewater Courses</u>
Class 1	24 months (8 wastewater courses)
Class 2	12 months (4 wastewater courses)
Class 3	6 months (2 wastewater courses)
Class 4	6 months (2 wastewater courses)

11. How is credit applied if my job duties consist of both wastewater operating experience and related experience?

If your job duties consist of both wastewater operating experience and related experience, credit is assessed based on the percentage of time spent performing each type of duties. If 50% or more of time at work is classified as wastewater operating experience, full credit is given for wastewater operating experience and zero credit is given for related experience. If less than 50% of time at work is classified as wastewater operating experience, half credit is given for wastewater operating experience and half credit is given for related experience.

12. How many hours per week must be worked to be considered full-time and/or part-time?

30 hours or more per week is considered full-time employment and may be given full credit toward eligibility determination. Less than 30 hours per week is considered part-time employment and may be given partial credit toward eligibility determination. Less than 30 hours but greater than 10 hours per week may be given 50% credit toward eligibility determination. If the number of hours worked is 10 hours or less per week, then only 25% credit toward eligibility determination will be given.

13. How often and where are wastewater examinations offered?

Examinations are offered every month at three sites around the state. In the Greater Chicago metropolitan area an exam is offered every month in the Des Plaines Regional office. Other testing locations include the Springfield, Illinois EPA Headquarters and at ERTC in Edwardsville associated with SIU-E. At times, additional special exams may be offered at conferences. Please check the Illinois EPA website for the current examination calendar.

14. How do I obtain wastewater certification?

The necessary steps to become certified are:

- Submit a completed application to the wastewater Operator Certification Unit. Applications are available from the Operator Certification Unit or on the Illinois EPA website (www.epa.state.il.us/water). Application is reviewed and applicant is sent either an examination admittance letter or a letter indicating experience credit given and the amount of eligibility shortfall.
- Obtain a score of 70 on a certification examination.

15. To become certified at a particular level, must I work up to that level by passing the examinations for all of the lower certification levels?

No, you may take any examination that you are eligible for. You do not have to pass the lower level examinations first.

16. If I am eligible for two different Class levels (i.e., Class 2 and Class 1), can I take an exam for each Class level at the same time?

No, you are allowed a maximum of three hours to complete the exam. Currently there are 100 questions per exam. To ensure there is adequate time to complete the exam without rushing through the questions, only one exam can be taken at a time.

17. How many questions are on each exam?

Currently the Collection Systems, the Class 4, Class 3, Class 2 and the Class 1 exam have 100 questions each. The industrial Class K (facility-specific) exam has a total of 15 questions, 5 multiple choice and 10 short answer/essay. The industrial Class K-WR (general) exam has a total of 14 questions, 7 multiple choice and 7 short answer/essay.

18. If I fail an examination, how long must I wait to retake it?

There is no minimum period you must wait before you can retake an examination. You can take an examination the next time it is offered, once you have received your examination results notification letter.

19. Can I schedule to take an examination for the same certification level on more than one examination date?

No, you may only schedule for one examination date and location at a time. If you are scheduled for an examination, you may not schedule to take the same examination again until after you receive your examination results notification letter. The number of examinees that can be accommodated at each examination site is limited and if an individual schedules for more than one examination, it denies someone else the opportunity to take an examination.

If you are scheduled for an examination and after scheduling, find out you will not be able to attend as planned, you may contact the Operator Certification Unit to change your scheduled examination date.

20. Can I just show up at an examination site and take an examination?

No, you must first be determined eligible to take an examination. Eligibility is determined through the application process described above. In addition, each examination site will accommodate only a certain number of examinees and, even if you are eligible, there is no

guarantee that there will be room for you. All scheduling for examinations will be done on a first-come first-served basis through the Operator Certification Unit. If you show up at an examination site and your name is not on the exam roster and you don't have an admittance letter, you will be turned away.

21. Can I take a certification examination before I meet the eligibility requirements for that certification level?

No, you must satisfy the eligibility requirements for a particular certification level before you will be allowed to take the corresponding examination.

22. What is the purpose of the Operator-In-Training certificates?

The Operator-In-Training Basic certificate is intended to recognize individuals who are just beginning a career in the wastewater treatment field. This examination stresses basic general knowledge of wastewater treatment processes. The Operator-In-Training Intermediate and Advanced certificates are intended to provide an alternative route for obtaining Class 2 certification for operators at activated sludge facilities located in large metropolitan areas. These examinations stress the activated sludge treatment processes rather than the treatment processes included on the Class 4 and Class 3 examinations since these operators are not familiar with the operation of lagoons, trickling filters, packed towers, etc.

23. Can an individual with an Operator-In-Training certificate be considered as the properly certified operator for a wastewater treatment facility?

No, the properly certified operator for a particular wastewater treatment facility must be certified at a level equal to or higher than the certification level required for that facility. An Operator-In-Training certificate does not meet this requirement.

24. Does the properly certified wastewater operator need to be present at the wastewater treatment facility all the time that it is in operation?

The properly certified operator must exercise direct and active field supervision of the wastewater treatment facility. Situations will dictate whether or not the physical presence of the properly certified operator is required on site. However, in all situations, it is expected that the properly certified operator has sufficient knowledge of the treatment facility to handle any situation expeditiously and correctly.

25. What is the difference between the general Class K-WR and the facility-specific Class K certificates?

The general Class K certificate, also referred to as a Class K-WR (Water Remediation), is intended only for treatment or pretreatment facilities which treat groundwater contaminated with gasoline, diesel fuel, jet fuel, fuel oil, and/or kerosene. Most of these facilities are associated with entities which store petroleum fuels underground, such as gas stations. The

main treatment process involved is either air stripping or activated carbon canister. Facilities treating groundwater contaminated with other substances, such as solvents, require facility-specific Class K certification. An operator who holds Class K-WR certification may operate any treatment or pretreatment facility in Illinois which treats groundwater contaminated with gasoline, diesel fuel, jet fuel, fuel oil, and/or kerosene.

A facility-specific Class K certificate, as the name implies, is issued for the operation of the specific industrial wastewater treatment or pretreatment facility for which the operator wrote the examination. An operator, with a facility-specific Class K certificate, who leaves the facility in which he is certified, to operate another industrial wastewater treatment or pretreatment facility, must apply for and pass the Class K examination for the second industrial wastewater treatment or pretreatment facility in order to be properly certified for the second facility. In addition, an operator who holds a facility-specific Class K industrial wastewater treatment or pretreatment facility which is upgraded to include additional and/or different treatment processes than the original facility must apply for and pass the Class K examination for the upgraded industrial wastewater treatment or pretreatment facility in order to be properly certified for the upgraded facility.

26. If I hold a municipal certification, such as a Class 1, can I operate an industrial facility without taking a Class K exam?

No, municipal and industrial wastewater treatment works have different operating requirements which are spelled out in the operating and discharge permits held by the facilities. Industrial facilities require a facility-specific Class K operator certified for operations at that specific facility. (See Item #25 above.)

27. Do I need to notify the Agency if I change my name or home address, or if I begin or terminate employment with a wastewater treatment works facility?

Yes, whenever a certified operator begins or terminates employment with a wastewater treatment works or pretreatment works, the employee/operator and the owner of the facility must notify the Agency of any changes in writing within 7 days. An operator must notify the Agency within 30 days of any change in name and/or home address.

The [Change in Personnel Notification Form](#) (available on the IEPA website) should be used to notify the Agency of these changes.

28. How long is a wastewater certificate in effect? Do wastewater certificates have to be renewed?

There is no renewal requirement for wastewater operator certificates at the present time. Currently, a wastewater operator certificate has no expiration date. There are two ways a certified operator may become uncertified. One is that an operator may voluntarily return his certification to the Operator Certification Unit. The other is that the Agency may revoke an operator's certificate due to improper actions performed by the operator in the course of operating a wastewater treatment facility. It should be noted that although there is no

renewal requirement for wastewater certificates at the present time, this does not preclude the institution of wastewater certificate renewal at some point in the future.

29. Are there any fees associated with wastewater operator certification?

There are no fees associated with wastewater operator certification at the present time. However, this does not preclude the institution of wastewater certification fees at some point in the future.

30. Is there any continuing education requirement associated with wastewater operator certification?

There is no continuing education requirement associated with wastewater operator certification at the present time. However, this does not preclude the institution of a continuing education requirement for wastewater operator certification in the future.

31. Does Illinois have reciprocity with wastewater certifying authorities from any other states?

Yes, depending on the reciprocal state. The certifying state's rules and regulations, in conjunction with an individual's education and employment qualifications, are used to determine the specific Illinois certificate that can be issued. However, according to Illinois regulations, if another state does not accept Illinois' program for reciprocity, then Illinois cannot accept that state for reciprocity. It should be noted that, due to the uniqueness of Illinois' industrial certification program, it is not possible to consider issuing Class K certificates by reciprocity. Collection system certification is also not considered through reciprocity as it is a voluntary certification. (See Item #1 above.)

32. Can the Agency 'discipline' wastewater operators?

Yes, the Agency can 'discipline' wastewater operators through the certificate sanction process. Potential causes for sanctions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Obtaining or attempting to obtain certification by fraud or deceit.
- Gross negligence or gross misconduct in the operation of a wastewater treatment facility or pretreatment facility.
- Falsification of records and reports that are required by the Environmental Protection Act or any rules promulgated under it.
- Willful failure to maintain records and reports that are required by the Environmental Protection Act or any rules promulgated under it.
- Willful non-submission of records and reports that are required by the Environmental Protection Act or any rules promulgated under it.
- Willful violation of the Environmental Protection Act or any rules that are promulgated under it.

- A final judgment in a civil action or a conviction in a criminal action that an operator has performed any of the acts listed above.

Sanctions include, but are not limited to, prohibition of application for certification, probation, suspension, and revocation.

33. What does it mean if my wastewater certificate is suspended?

A suspended wastewater certificate is considered invalid during the suspension period. A certificate may be suspended for a period of up to 18 months. Experience obtained during the suspension period will not be considered for credit toward meeting certification eligibility requirements. At the end of the suspension period, the certificate is again considered valid. Experience obtained after the suspension is lifted will be considered for credit toward meeting certification eligibility requirements.

34. What does it mean if my wastewater certificate is revoked?

A revoked certificate is considered invalid. The operator may not reapply for any certificate for a period of not less than 18 months and not more than 4 years. Experience obtained during the revocation is not considered for credit toward meeting certification eligibility requirements. At the end of the revocation period, an operator must apply for and pass the certification examination for the desired level of certification to become certified as a wastewater operator again.

Municipal Operator Certification Program

All publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities and municipal wastewater treatment works not owned by an industry are classified in one of four groups. These groups are:

- Group 1 - all wastewater treatment facilities 1.0 MGD or more design average flow (DAF) excluding lagoon systems and primary treatment systems
- Group 2 - activated sludge systems with a DAF of less than 1.0 MGD
- Group 3 - fixed film processes, stationary and rotating trickling filters, Rotating Biological Contactors, Imhoff tank systems, and sand filters with a DAF of less than 1.0 MGD and all primary treatment systems
- Group 4 - all aerated and non-aerated lagoon treatment systems

The certified wastewater operator requirements for each group of wastewater treatment facilities are as follows:

- Group 1 - wastewater treatment facilities require a certified Class 1 wastewater operator
- Group 2 - wastewater treatment facilities require a certified Class 2 or Class 1 wastewater operator
- Group 3 - wastewater treatment facilities require a certified Class 3, Class 2, or Class 1 wastewater operator
- Group 4 - wastewater treatment facilities require a certified Class 4, Class 3, Class 2, or Class 1 wastewater operator

The eligibility requirements for the Class 1, Class 2, Class 3, and Class 4 wastewater certification examinations are given below.

Class 1 - Requires a total of 8 years' experience

Minimum eligibility requirement - High school completion or GED certificate plus 4 years' wastewater operator experience and the equivalent of 4 years' substitutional experience

Class 2 – Requires a total of 6 years' experience

Minimum eligibility requirement - High school completion or GED certificate plus 3 years' wastewater operator experience and the equivalent of 3 years' substitutional experience

Class 3 - Requires a total of 3 years' experience

Minimum eligibility requirement - High school completion or GED certificate plus 1½ years wastewater operator experience and the equivalent of 1½ years substitutional experience

Class 4 - Requires a total of 1-year experience

Minimum eligibility requirement - 3 months' wastewater operator experience and the equivalent of 9 months substitutional experience

Wastewater operator experience includes direct hands-on physical operation of wastewater treatment equipment and/or wastewater treatment processes, direct active field supervision of wastewater treatment equipment and/or wastewater treatment processes, and/or direct and active involvement in process control decisions for wastewater treatment processes. Wastewater operator experience may be acquired at either domestic/municipal or industrial wastewater treatment facilities.

Substitutional experience includes credit for completion of wastewater courses, credit for completed college work (applicable to Classes 3, 2 and 1 only), credit for completion of college programs one-year in length designed specifically for wastewater treatment works operation, credit for experience operating collection systems or drinking water supplies. The only time college credit can be applied toward Class 4 eligibility is upon the successful completion of a one-year college program specifically designed for wastewater treatment works operation, which includes actual operation of a wastewater treatment works, and may be substituted for a maximum of one-year wastewater operator experience, such as with the program offered through ERTC at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Partial credit for laboratory and/or maintenance experience at a wastewater treatment works may be granted only after hands-on wastewater operating experience has been obtained.

Industrial (Class K) Operator Certification Program

Currently, there are two types of Class K (Industrial) certificates offered. The first type is facility-specific and covers a particular industrial wastewater treatment facility or pretreatment facility. Individuals who pass a facility-specific Class K examination are issued a certificate that is only valid for the specific industrial wastewater treatment facility or pretreatment facility for which the examination was taken. Individuals seeking wastewater operator certification for multiple industrial wastewater treatment facilities or pretreatment facilities requiring facility-specific Class K certification must complete and pass the facility-specific Class K examination for each treatment facility.

Persons seeking certification for a surface water or groundwater remediation treatment system for contamination resulting from gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene, jet fuel, or heating oil may opt to take another type of Class K examination, the Class K-WR (Water Remediation). A general Class K-WR examination is available which covers treatment systems associated with these water remediation systems. Individuals who pass this general exam are issued a Class K-WR general certificate that is valid for all water remediation systems for contamination resulting from gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene, jet fuel, or heating oil.

Any individual who actively operates an industrial wastewater treatment facility or pretreatment facility or who actively supervises the operation of an industrial wastewater treatment facility or pretreatment facility is eligible for Class K wastewater operator certification. Currently, there are no minimum education or experience eligibility requirements for Class K wastewater operator certification. A completed Class K certification application must be submitted for each industrial wastewater treatment facility or pretreatment facility for which Class K wastewater operator certification is sought.

Operator-In-Training Program

The Operator-In-Training program has 3 different levels – Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. The Basic Level provides pre-service and entry level operators certification for general knowledge of wastewater treatment plant operations. The Intermediate Level and Advanced Level provide an alternative for operators employed at Group 1 or Group 2 wastewater treatment facilities to work toward Class 2 wastewater operator certification. The Intermediate Level and Advanced Level Operator-In-Training examinations emphasize wastewater treatment processes found at Group 1 and Group 2 wastewater treatment facilities. Possession of an Operator-In-Training certificate does not allow an individual to function as the properly certified wastewater operator for any wastewater treatment facility.

The eligibility requirements for Operator-In-Training certification are given below.

Operator-In-Training – Advanced Level

Requires a total of 3 years' experience

Minimum eligibility requirement - High school completion or GED certificate, plus 1½ years wastewater operator experience and the equivalent of 1½ years substitutional experience

Operator-In-Training – Intermediate Level

Requires a total of 1-year experience

Minimum eligibility requirement - 3 months' wastewater operator experience and high school completion or GED certificate and the equivalent of 6 months substitutional experience

Operator-In-Training – Basic Level

Requires either 3 months of wastewater operator experience OR completion of 1 wastewater course

Collection System Operator Certification Program

This is a voluntary program available to individuals directly involved in the operation and maintenance of collection systems/sewers who choose to participate in a certification program.

There is one level of collection system operator certification.

The minimum eligibility requirements for this certificate are:

12 months' experience total which must be made up of high school completion or GED certificate, plus a minimum of 3 months collection system operating experience, and the equivalent of 6 months substitutional experience. Up to 6 months substitutional credit may be granted for completion of collection system and/or wastewater courses, and/or for wastewater operating experience or any combination of substitute credits, not to exceed 6 months.

Certification Examinations

Municipal, Operator-In-Training, & Collection System Examinations

The questions used on wastewater and collection system examinations were developed by wastewater professionals, instructors, certified operators, etc. Each question has been validated by a panel comprised of experts who, collectively, have many years of experience in the wastewater and/or collection system operations field. Every question, with each of the four answer selections, has been examined for content, readability, accuracy, and relation to the corresponding Task Analysis. The validation process is on-going and new questions are validated as they are developed. Validated questions, which through use and statistical evidence are shown to be unreliable (i.e., they do not test what they are supposed to test), are returned to the review panel for restructuring or removal from the question bank. Finally, all questions in the question bank are periodically reviewed by the review panel to make sure they are still current and valid for wastewater operators.

Each exam question is related to one of the following subject categories:

Activated Sludge	Mathematics
Chemical Addition	Motors
Collection Systems	Preliminary Treatment
Digesters	Primary Treatment
Disinfection	Pumps and Pumping
Electrical	Rotating Biological Contactors (RBCs)
Flow Measurement	Recordkeeping
General Information	Rules and Regulations
Imhoff Tanks	Safety and Health
Intermittent Sand Filters	Secondary Sedimentation
Laboratory	Sludge Drying Beds
Lagoons	Sludge Handling
Maintenance	Tertiary Treatment
Management	Trickling Filters

Each examination version has 100 multiple choice questions taken from the categories which are applicable for the certification level being tested on that particular examination. Although slight variations in subject categories and numbers of questions per subject category may exist between versions of examinations for the same certificate level, every effort is made to maintain consistency and equality between different examination versions for the same certificate level.

The table below indicates the subject categories generally associated with each of the four municipal/domestic certification examinations. These numbers are subject to change.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Class 4</u>	<u>Class 3</u>	<u>Class 2</u>	<u>Class 1</u>
Activated Sludge	4	10	15	18
Chemical Addition	1	1	3	2
Collection Systems	5	5	3	3
Digesters	7	5	8	8
Disinfection	3	3	5	5
Electrical	2	2	3	2
Flow Measurement	2	2	4	2
General Information	12	6	3	3
Imhoff Tanks	1	2	1	1
Intermittent Sand Filters	3	0	0	0
Laboratory	5	5	5	5
Lagoons	16	5	3	2
Maintenance	4	3	1	1
Management	2	2	3	5
Mathematics	10	10	10	10
Motors	2	2	2	2
Preliminary Treatment	2	2	2	2
Primary Treatment	2	4	2	2
Pumps and Pumping	2	4	4	4
RBCs (rotating biological contactors)	1	1	1	1
Recordkeeping	2	2	2	3
Rule and Regulations	1	2	2	2
Safety and Health	5	5	5	5
Secondary Clarifiers	1	1	2	2
Sludge Drying Beds	2	2	2	2
Sludge Handling	2	2	4	4
Tertiary Treatment	0	0	2	2
Trickling Filters	7	13	3	2

Each examination will be increase successively in difficulty from the class 4 exam to the class 1 exam. The class 4 will emphasize lagoons and lagoon related math. The class 3 will emphasize fixed film and intermediate math. The class 2 will emphasize activated sludge and activated sludge math. The class 1 will emphasize activated sludge (advanced) and complex math.

The subject categories generally associated with the Operator-In-Training examination are:

Activated Sludge, Chemical Addition, Digesters, Disinfection, Electrical, Flow Measurement, General Information, Laboratory, Maintenance, Mathematics, Motors, Preliminary Treatment, Primary Treatment, Pumps and Pumping, Safety, Secondary Clarifiers, Sludge Drying Beds, Sludge Handling

The subject categories generally associated with the Collection System examination are:

Chemical Addition, Collection Systems, Flow Measurement, General Information, Maintenance, Management, Mathematics, Motors, Preliminary Treatment, Pumps and Pumping, Recordkeeping, Rules and Regulations, Safety

Individuals taking these examinations are given scratch paper, pencils, answer sheet, and one examination booklet containing questions, formulas and conversion factors. The only items that may be brought to the examination site are the examinee's examination admittance letter, a photo ID, and a calculator which must be non-programmable and incapable of storing alphanumeric data. Other electronic devices (cell phones, Apple watches, iPods, mp3 players, blackberries, etc.) must be turned off the entire time an individual is in the examination room. A maximum of three hours is allowed to complete the examination. A copy of the conversion factors and formulas provided with each examination is included at the end of this study guide. Familiarization with the format should cut down on referencing time during the examination.

Examination results are sent to an examinee's home address, usually within 3 weeks of the day the examination is taken. Each examinee receives a letter indicating whether he/she passed the examination accompanied by a detailed breakdown of performance on the examination. Examinees who fail to achieve a score of 70% on an examination can use these results to determine the areas to focus on for further study.

Examinees that score less than 70% on an examination may reschedule for the same level of examination without submitting another application, by returning the examination rescheduling form provided with their examination results or by calling the wastewater operator certification staff.

Industrial (Class K) Examinations

The examinations consist of multiple choice questions covering basic wastewater mathematics and short answer/essay questions designed to test an individual's knowledge of the wastewater facility for which certification is sought. Examinees should be capable of providing, without the use of supplemental aids, information pertaining to an industrial wastewater treatment works in the following areas:

Flow schematics;
Purpose of each treatment unit;
Theory of operation (principles of treatment) for each treatment unit;
Measures used to prevent and correct process upsets;
Methods used for solids handling;
Sludge disposal techniques;
Sources, characteristics, and concentrations of the wastes treated;
Removal efficiencies for each treatment unit;
Effluent monitoring requirements;
Laboratory techniques and interpretation of laboratory results;
Safety considerations;
Rules and regulations which apply;
Record keeping

Individuals taking a Class K examination are given scratch paper, pencils, and one examination booklet containing questions, formulas and conversion factors. The only items that may be brought to the examination site are the examinee's examination admittance letter, a photo ID, and a calculator which must be non-programmable and incapable of storing alpha-numeric data. Other electronic devices (cell phones, Apple watches, iPods, mp3 players, blackberries, etc.) must be turned off the entire time an individual is in the examination room. A maximum of three hours is allowed to complete the examination. A copy of the conversion factors and formulas provided with each examination is included at the end of this study guide. Familiarization with the format should cut down on your referencing time during the examination.

Examination results are sent to an examinee's home address, usually within 4 weeks of the day the examination is taken. Each examinee receives a letter indicating whether he/she passed the examination.

Examinees that score less than 70% on an examination may reschedule for the same level of examination without submitting another application by returning the examination scheduling form provided with their examination results or by calling the wastewater operator certification staff.

Wastewater Certification Examination Scheduling

Every month approximately 50+ individuals are scheduled to write wastewater operator certification examinations. Most of the facilities used to administer wastewater operator certification examinations are conference rooms located in State Regional Office buildings. The number of individuals that can be scheduled for a wastewater certification examination at a specific location is limited by the physical size of the room used. Thus, there is a maximum number of individuals that we can schedule for a given examination site.

If an application is received early enough, in most instances we are able to schedule an individual for the examination site and examination date requested. At times, if the situation warrants, an additional examination session at a specific location may be scheduled. Individuals who attempt to schedule for a second examination date and location when they are already scheduled for a different examination date and location, or individuals who have taken an examination and do not wait to receive their examination results before scheduling to retake an examination, aggravate the scheduling situation. In order to give everyone an equal opportunity to take a wastewater certification examination, we offer the following guidelines for wastewater examination scheduling:

1. Indicate a first and second choice for examination date and/or examination location when submitting a wastewater certification application or scheduling to retake an examination. In almost all cases, an individual will be scheduled for one of his/her two choices.
2. Wait until examination results are received before scheduling to retake an examination. If you think you did that poorly, your time would be best spent seeking additional wastewater treatment knowledge until your actual score is received.
3. If you know ahead of time that you cannot make it to an examination for which you are scheduled, contact the Operator Certification Unit as soon as possible to cancel so another individual can possibly be scheduled in your place. Your name will be removed from the list of the examination for which you cancelled and taken off the exam roster. Should you show up for that examination anyway, you will be turned away.

Contract Operation

Owners of wastewater treatment works, rather than employing a properly certified wastewater operator, may choose to meet the certified wastewater operator requirement by contracting either with an individual wastewater operator with the required wastewater certificate or with a contract operations firm. In either case, a copy of the signed contract is required to be submitted to the Agency for review. The section of the wastewater operator certification rules pertaining to contract operation is included below.

Section 380.1000 General

- a) The owner of a wastewater treatment works or pretreatment works who enters into a contractual agreement with a properly certified operator for the operation of a wastewater treatment works or pretreatment works shall submit a copy of the contractual agreement to the Agency.
- b) The contractual agreement must be submitted to the Agency within seven days of the effective date of the contractual agreement. The Agency must be notified by the owner in writing within seven days should the contract be terminated prior to the expiration date of the contract.

Section 380.1005 Contract Provisions

The contract must include the following:

- a) The parties involved, including names, addresses and phone numbers of each and the last 4 digits of the contract operator's Social Security number or their Operator ID #;
- b) The specific starting and expiration dates of the contract;
- c) The minimum number of visits to be made to the wastewater treatment works by the contract operator each week;
- d) The duties and responsibilities of each party involved including, at a minimum, the party responsible for:
 - 1) Proper operation of the wastewater treatment works including meeting all NPDES permit effluent requirements;
 - 2) Sample collection pursuant to the NPDES Permit;
 - 3) Preparation and submittal of Discharge Monitoring Reports;
 - 4) Laboratory analysis;
 - 5) Maintaining lift stations;
 - 6) Maintaining spare parts inventory;
 - 7) Maintaining required operating records and reports;
 - 8) Providing labor and materials for correcting any maintenance and operational problems;
 - 9) Maintaining, and if necessary, implementing an emergency operating plan;
 - 10) Performing preventive maintenance on equipment as recommended by the manufacturer; and
 - 11) Performing routine operational control testing as recommended by the Agency.
- e) The signature of each party of the contract.

Section 380.1010 Non-party Operators

- a) When the properly certified operator is not a party to the contract, the operator must sign a document indicating acceptance of responsibilities of the certified operator as specified in the contract.
- b) In the event that a different properly certified operator is assigned to operate the wastewater treatment works, which is the subject of the contract, the new operator shall sign and submit a document as required in Subsection (a) above.

Section 380.1015 Documentation of Contract Provisions

The contract operator shall maintain records to document that all contract provisions are being met.

Section 380.1020 Contract Approval

The Agency will approve a contract agreement when the contractual operator is properly certified and the provisions of Sections 380.1000, 380.1005 and 380.1010 are satisfied. The Agency will withdraw an approval when it is determined that the contract provisions are not being met or are inadequate to assure proper operation of the wastewater treatment works.

Section 380.1025 Contract Modifications and Extensions

Modifications or extensions to contractual agreements must be submitted to the Agency as a new contract.

Training Opportunities

Whether you are just starting in the wastewater treatment field or have been in the field for many years, there is training and resources available to meet most any need. In addition to the many training materials that are available (see Suggested Study/Reference Materials on page 27 below for the most widely used/recognized), various community colleges throughout the state offer classroom courses on wastewater treatment. In areas where no formal classroom wastewater training is available, individuals may opt to take one or more of the home study courses that are available. Individuals seeking hands-on training along with classroom instruction should check out the 1-year water and wastewater training program through the Environmental Resources Training Center (ERTC) located on the campus of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. In addition, local, state, and national operator groups offer timely technical sessions at their meetings/conferences on various aspects of wastewater treatment. Some equipment manufacturers also provide training on various topics, usually pertaining to the equipment that they handle.

Operator Organizations

Wastewater operator groups function at the local, state, and national levels. In addition to the information presented via the technical sessions at their meetings/conference, these groups provide a framework for networking amongst individual operators. A listing of wastewater operator groups is given below. (Current as of August 2017)

Local Groups

Central Illinois Professional Wastewater Operators (CIPWO)

<http://www.orgsites.com/il/cipwo/>

Fox Valley Operators Association

<http://www.fvoa-illinois.org/>

Heart of Illinois Water Pollution Control Operators

Kish-Rock Water Pollution Control Operators

Mid-Central Water Pollution Control Operators

Mississippi – Kaskaskia Valley Water Pollution Control Operators (MISKA)

<http://www.mis-ka.com/>

Miss-Rock Water Pollution Control Operators

North Central Water & Wastewater Operators Association

Southern Illinois Wastewater Operators (SIWO)

Statewide Groups

Illinois Association of Water Pollution Control Operators (IAWPCO)

<http://www.iawpco.org/>

Illinois Water Environment Association (IWEA) <http://www.iweasite.org/>

Illinois Rural Water Association (IRWA)

<http://www.ilrwa.org/>

Regional Groups

Central States Water Environment Association

<http://www.cswea.org/>

National Groups

Water Environment Federation (WEF)

<http://www.wef.org/>

SOURCES OF WASTEWATER STUDY/REFERENCE MATERIALS
SOURCE ADDRESSES

Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville
Environmental Resources Training Center
Campus Box 1075
Edwardsville, IL 62026-1075
(618) 650-2030
www.siu.edu/ertc/ email:
siue-ertc@siue.edu

Department of Civil Engineering
California State University, Sacramento
6000 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95819 (916)
278-6142 www.owp.csus.edu
email: wateroffice@owp.csus.edu

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
DWPC/Permit Section/Watershed Unit
#15
P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, IL 62794-9276
(217) 782-1696

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
BOW/Compliance Assurance Section #19
P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, IL 62794-9276
(217) 782-9720
www.epa.state.il.us/water/operator-

cert/waste-water/index.html
email: Susan.Lee@illinois.gov

CRC Press, Inc./Lewis Publishers 2000
Corporate Blvd., N.W.
Boca Raton, FL 33431
(800) 272-7737

National Technical Information Service
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161

ORD Publications
P.O. Box 19962
Cincinnati, OH 45219
(513) 569-7562

Technomic Publishing Co., Inc.
851 New Holland Avenue, Box 3535
Lancaster, PA 17604
800/233-9936 or 717/291-5609

Texas Water Utilities Association
1106 Clayton Lane, Suite 101-E
Austin, TX 78723-1033

Water Environment Federation
Publications Order Department
601 Wythe Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-1994
(800) 666-0206
www.wef.org/onlineeducation/ email:
pubs@wef.org

Association of Boards of Certification
2805 SW Snyder Blvd., Suite 535
Ankeny, IA 50023 (515) 232-3623
www.abccert.org/
www.abccert.org/testing_services/default.asp

Suggested Study/Reference Materials

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AT SACRAMENTO:

Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants, a Field Study Training Program

- a. Volume I
- b. Volume II

Operation and Maintenance of Wastewater Collection Systems, a Field Study Training Program

- a. Volume I
- b. Volume II

Advanced Waste Treatment, a Field Study Training Program

Membrane Bioreactors (MBRs) – 2012 - ISBN 978-1-59371-064-4

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES TRAINING CENTER (ERTC):

Math Review for Wastewater Certification

Stabilization Pond Filtration

Guide to Microscopic Evaluation for Sewage Treatment Operations

NOTE: ERTC offers the Sacramento State University courses (books and grading) to individuals who are interested in completing them for a grade. Individuals who wish to obtain the books only for reference purposes (i.e. do not want to enroll in the course), should obtain the books directly from Sacramento State University.

ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (IEPA):

35 Ill. Adm. Code, Subtitle C: Water Pollution

Design Criteria for Sludge Application on Land (35 Ill. Adm. Code 391)

(Request from Permits Section)

Procedures for the Certification of Operators of Wastewater Treatment Works

(35 Ill. Adm. Code 380) (Request from Compliance Assurance Section)

ORD PUBLICATIONS &/or NATIONAL TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICE (NTIS):

1. Stabilization Ponds Operations Manual, (USEPA 430/9-77-012)
2. Aerobic Biological Wastewater Treatment Facilities, (USEPA 430/9-77-006, N/055-001-01071-1)
3. Anaerobic Sludge Digestion, (USEPA 430/9-76-001)

WATER ENVIRONMENT FEDERATION (WEF):

(NOTE: WEF's Technical Publications Catalog includes many items in addition to those listed below.)

MOP 1 Safety and Health in Wastewater Systems

MOP 11 Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants

Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater - Latest Edition

Math Workbook for Collection System Operators

Wastewater Treatment Operator Grades I & II Exam Survival Guide

WEF/ABC Certification Study Guide for Wastewater Treatment Personnel

WEF/ABC Certification Study Guide for Collection Systems Personnel

MOP OM-10 Operation and Maintenance of Trickling Filters, RBC's, and Related Processes

MOP 16 Anaerobic Sludge Digestion

MOP OM-8 Operation and Maintenance of Sludge Dewatering Systems

Basic Maintenance of Circular Secondary Clarifiers - PROBE

Basic Maintenance of Rectangular Secondary Clarifiers - PROBE

MOP 5 Aeration in Wastewater Treatment

MOP OM-7 Operation of Extended Aeration Package Plants

Basic Activated Sludge Process Control - PROBE

Basic Maintenance of Diffused Aeration Systems - PROBE

Basic Maintenance of Mechanical Aeration Systems - PROBE

Wastewater Biology: The Microlife

Wastewater Biology: The Life Processes

Activated Sludge Microbiology

MOP OM-9 Activated Sludge

MOP 2 Preliminary Treatment for Wastewater Facilities

MOP FD-1 Sludge Thickening

MOP FD-9 Wastewater Residuals Stabilization

MOP FD-14 Sludge Conditioning

TECHNOMIC PUBLISHING CO., INC.

Applied Math for Wastewater Plant Operators

CRC PRESS, INC./LEWIS PUBLISHERS

Management & Supervision for Working Professionals

TEXAS WATER UTILITIES ASSOCIATION:

Manual of Wastewater Treatment

Resources Pertaining to Treatment Facility Security

1. [Water Security Home \(USEPA\)](#)
2. [Management and Planning for Small Community Wastewater](#): Protecting Your Community's Assets: A Guide For Small Wastewater Systems (NETCSC)
3. [Vulnerability Self-Assessment Tool \(VSAT\) and the Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies \(AMSA\)](#)
4. [Emergency Preparedness USA \(FEMA\)](#)
5. Guarding Against Terrorist & Security Threats: Suggested Measures for Drinking Water & Wastewater Utilities, Appendix B of Emergency Response Plan Guidance for Small & Medium Community Water Systems to Comply with the Public Health Security & Bioterrorism Preparedness & Response Act of 2002 (USEPA)
http://www.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/pubs/small_medium_ERP_guidance040704.pdf
6. Guidance for Water Utility Response, Recovery, & Remediation Actions for Manmade &/or Technological Emergencies
<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/watersecurity/pubs/er-guidance.pdf>

Wastewater Operator Certification Contact Information

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

Bureau of Water/ CAS #19

P.O. Box 19276

1021 N. Grand Ave. East

Springfield, IL 62794-9276

Telephone: 217-782-9720

Fax: 217-782-0075

Email: Susan.Lee@illinois.gov

WASTEWATER MATH FORMULA SHEET

CONVERSION FACTORS

12 in = 1 ft	27 cu ft = 1 cu yd	1,000 mg = 1 gm	60 sec = 1 min
3 ft = 1 yd	7.5 gal = 1 cu ft	1,000 gm = 1 kg	60 min = 1 hour
5,280 ft = 1 mi	8.34 lbs = 1 gal water	1,000 ml = 1 liter	1,440 min = 1 day
144 sq in = 1 sq ft	62.4 lbs = 1 cu ft water	2.31 ft water = 1 psi	10,000 mg/L = 1%
43,560 sq ft = 1 acre	746 watts = 1hp	454 gm = 1 lb	
Population Equivalent (PE) =	0.17 pounds BOD/capita/day		
=	0.20 pounds SS/capita/day		
=	100 gallons water/capita/day		

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>L</i> = Length	<i>W</i> = Width	<i>H</i> = Height	<i>r</i> = Radius	<i>d</i> = Diameter
<i>Q</i> = Flow Rate	<i>A</i> = Area	<i>V</i> = Volume	<i>v</i> = Velocity	

AREA

Rectangle: $A = L \times W$

Triangle: $A = \frac{1}{2} (B \times H)$

Circle: $A = \pi r^2$
 $A = .785d^2$

VOLUME

Cylinder: $V = \pi r^2 H$

Basin: $L \times W \times H$

Cone: $V = \frac{1}{3} (\pi r^2 H)$

$V = .785d^2 H$

$V = \frac{1}{3} (.785d^2 H)$

VELOCITY

Velocity: $\frac{\text{distance}}{\text{time}}$

DETENTION TIME

Detention Time: $\frac{\text{Volume}}{Q \text{ (flow)}}$

POUNDS FORMULA

concentration x flow or volume x constant

$\frac{\text{mg}}{\text{L}}$ (or ppm) x MG (or MGD) x 8.34 (pounds per gallon of water)

SEDIMENTATION AND LOADING RATE

Weir Overflow Rate: $\frac{\text{total flow}}{\text{length of weir}}$

Surface Settling Rate: $\frac{\text{flow rate}}{\text{surface area}}$

$$\text{Solids Loading Rate: } \frac{\text{lbs solids applied}}{\text{surface area}}$$

$$\text{Percent Efficiency or Percent Removal: } \frac{(\text{in} - \text{out})}{(\text{in})} \times 100 \%$$

$$\text{Organic Loading Rate (Lagoon): } \frac{\text{lbs BOD per day}}{\text{acres of lagoon}}$$

$$\text{Organic Loading Rate (Trickling Filter): } \frac{\text{lbs BOD per day}}{1000 \text{ cu ft of filter}}$$

ACTIVATED SLUDGE

$$\text{SVI: } \frac{30 \text{ min settling volume (ml/L)}}{\text{MLSS (mg/L)}} \times 1,000 \text{ mg}$$

$$\text{Solids Inventory, lbs: } (\text{Tank volume, MG}) \times (\text{solids concentration, mg/L}) \times (8.34 \text{ lbs / gal})$$

$$\text{Gould's Sludge Age, days: } \frac{\text{Solids Under Aeration (MLSS), lbs}}{\text{Solids Added (influent TSS), lbs/day}}$$

$$\text{F/M: } \frac{\text{BOD Applied}}{\text{Organic Solids Under Aeration}}$$

$$\text{MCRT: } \frac{\text{Solids Inventory (lbs in aeration)} + (\text{lbs in clarifier})}{\text{Solids Wasted (lbs WAS)} + \text{Effluent Solids (lbs TSS)}}$$

SLUDGE DIGESTION

$$\text{Dry Solids, lbs: } (\text{sludge, gal}) \times (\text{sludge, \% solids}) \times (8.34 \text{ lbs / gal})$$

$$\text{Lime Required, lbs: } (\text{sludge, MG}) \times (\text{volatile acids, mg/L}) \times (8.34 \text{ lbs / gal})$$

$$\text{Percent volatile solids reduction: } \frac{(\text{in} - \text{out})}{\text{in} - (\text{in} \times \text{out})} \times 100 \%$$

HORSEPOWER, FORCE, ELECTRICAL

$$\text{Water HP: } \frac{Q(\text{gpm}) \times 8.34 \text{ lbs / gal} \times \text{head (ft)}}{33,000 \text{ ft-lbs/min}}$$

$$\text{Brake HP: } \frac{\text{Water HP}}{\text{Pump Efficiency}}$$

Power: Current x Voltage

Voltage: Current x Resistance

Average Current:
$$\frac{\text{Line 1 Current} + \text{Line 2 Current} + \text{Line 3 Current}}{3}$$

Current Imbalance:
$$\frac{\text{Average Current} - \text{Maximum Deviation} \times 100}{\text{Average Current}}$$

Chemical Solution, lbs/gal:
$$\frac{(\text{solution } \%) \times (8.34 \text{ lbs/gal})}{100\%}$$

LAB PROCEDURES AND MEASUREMENTS

TSS, mg/L:
$$\frac{\text{Dry Sample (g)}}{\text{Amount of Sample (ml)}} \times \text{conversion factor}$$

VSS, mg/L:
$$\frac{\text{Dry Sample} - \text{Ash (g)}}{\text{Sample Volume (mL)}} \times \text{conversion factor}$$

VSS, %:
$$\frac{\text{Volatile Solids (mg/L)}}{\text{Total Suspended Solids (mg/L)}} \times 100 \%$$

% Moisture:
$$\frac{\text{Wet Sludge} - \text{Dry Solids}}{\text{Wet Sludge}} \times 100\%$$

BOD, mg/L
$$(\text{Initial DO} - \text{Final DO}) \times \frac{\text{Bottle Volume (mL)}}{\text{Sample Volume (mL)}}$$

Temperature Conversion:
$$\begin{aligned} ^\circ\text{F} &= (1.8 \times ^\circ\text{C}) + 32 \\ ^\circ\text{C} &= (^\circ\text{F} - 32) / 1.8 \end{aligned}$$

Chlorine Demand (mg/L): dosage (mg/L) – residual (mg/L)

This formula sheet edited July 2017

SUBJECT BREAKDOWN

The following is a list of the main subject areas that may be covered on the examinations.

I. General Information

- A. Characteristics of wastewater
- B. Activated sludge terminology

II. Collection Systems

- A. Routine operation and maintenance of collection system components
- B. Sewer installation inspections
- C. Troubleshooting collection systems

III. Pumps and Pumping

- A. Types of pumps and motors and their application
- B. Operation and maintenance
 - 1. Pumps
 - 2. Motors
 - 3. Pump and motor controls
 - 4. Electrical

IV. Flow Measurement

- A. Instruments
- B. Process controls

V. Preliminary Treatment

- A. Theory of preliminary treatment
- B. Operation and maintenance
 - 1. Bar screens
 - 2. Barminutors
 - 3. Comminutors
 - 4. Grit chambers

VI. Primary Treatment

- A. Theory of primary treatment
- B. Operation and maintenance
 - 1. Primary clarifiers
 - 2. Imhoff tanks

VII. Secondary Treatment

- A. Theory of secondary treatment
- B. Operation and Maintenance
 - 1. Lagoons
 - 2. Slow sand filters
 - 3. RBC's
 - 4. Trickling filters
 - 5. Activated sludge units
 - 6. Secondary Sedimentation

VIII. Sludge Handling

- A. Theory of sludge handling
- B. Operation and maintenance
 - 1. Anaerobic digesters
 - 2. Aerobic digesters
 - 3. Sludge drying equipment
 - a. Coil or cloth filters
 - b. Sludge drying beds
 - c. Filter presses
 - 4. Sludge lagoons
 - 5. Sludge thickening equipment
 - a. Flotation devices
 - b. Gravity thickening devices
 - c. Chemical addition and/or conditioning
 - 6. Sludge disposal
 - a. Land application
 - b. Landfill disposal
 - c. Incineration

IX. Tertiary Treatment

- A. Theory of tertiary treatment
- B. Operation and maintenance
 - 1. Polishing ponds
 - 2. Intermittent sand filters
 - 3. Rapid sand filters
 - 4. Microstrainers

X. Disinfection

- A. Theory of disinfection
- B. Operation and maintenance
 - 1. Chlorination systems
 - 2. Other disinfection systems

XI. Laboratory

A. Process control testing

1. BOD
2. TSS
3. COD
4. Settleable solids
5. Volatile solids
6. Volatile acids
7. Alkalinity
8. F/M ratio
9. Sludge age
10. SVI

B. NPDES testing

1. pH
2. BOD
3. TSS
4. Chlorine residual
5. Ammonia
6. DO
7. Heavy metals

XII. Safety and Health

- A. Clothing and apparel
- B. Machinery
- C. Chemical handling
- D. Laboratory
- E. Collection systems

XIII. Record Keeping

- A. Plant operations
- B. Laboratory data
- C. Financial data
- D. Maintenance data
- E. Accident data

XIV. Rules and Regulations

- A. 35 Ill. Adm. Code, Subtitle C: Water Pollution
- B. 35 Ill. Adm. Code Part 391 (Design Criteria for Sludge Application on Land)

- C. NPDES
- D. Local ordinances

XV. Lagoons

- A. Purpose of lagoons
- B. Description of lagoons
 - 1. Aerobic lagoons
 - 2. Anaerobic lagoons
 - 3. Facultative lagoons
 - 4. Aerated lagoons
- C. Operation of lagoons
- D. Troubleshooting of lagoons

XVI. Math

- A. Problem solving
- B. Formulas
- C. Process control
 - 1. Volume
 - 2. Area
 - 3. Pounds formula
 - 4. Organic loading
 - 5. Hydraulic loading
 - 6. Detention time
 - 7. Velocity
 - 8. SVI
 - 9. MCRT
 - 10. F/M ratio
 - 11. Sludge age
 - 12. Clarifier math
 - 13. Sludge math
 - 14. Conversions
 - 15. Electrical, horsepower

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

I. General Information

- A. Characteristics of wastewater
- B. Activated sludge terminology

Example Question:

The Hatfield Process is the same as the Kraus Process with the following exception.

- a) 10 to 15% of the return activated sludge stream is reaerated in the presence of anaerobic digester supernatant and digested sludge
- b) 65 to 70% of the return activated sludge stream is reaerated in the presence of anaerobic digester supernatant and digested sludge
- c) 100% of the return activated sludge stream is reaerated in the presence of anaerobic digester supernatant and digested sludge
- d) The Hatfield Process and the Krause Process are not similar enough to compare with only one exception

II. Collection Systems

- A. Routine operation and maintenance of collection system components
- B. Sewer installation inspections
- C. Troubleshooting collection systems

Example Question:

Below is a set of data or events, reflecting a problem at a pumping station. Wet well inlet receives dry weather flow; lead pump cycles on at proper wet well level; lag pump cycle on a proper wet well level; wet well level drops after lag pump cycles on; discharge pressure rises after lag pump cycles on. Study the data carefully. Which one of the following is the most probable cause of the problem?

- a) Lead pump's main fuse is blown
- b) Clogged suction line
- c) Lead and lag pumps do not alternate correctly
- d) None of the above

III. Pumps and Pumping

- A. Types of pumps and motors and their application
- B. Operation and maintenance
 - 1. Pumps
 - 2. Motors

3. Pump and motor controls
4. Electrical

Example Question:

The discharge piping of a 3-phase induction motor driven centrifugal pump is rerouted such that the TDH against which the pump is pumping is reduced by 50%. This will cause:

- a) the motor to draw more amperage
- b) motor to run cooler
- c) motor to run faster
- d) the motor to draw less amperage

IV. Flow Measurement

- A. Instruments
- B. Process controls

Example Question:

A magnetic flow meter is a:

- a) displacement meter
- b) differential head meter
- c) velocity head meter
- d) none of the above

V. Preliminary Treatment

- A. Theory of preliminary treatment
- B. Operation and maintenance
 1. Bar screens
 2. Barminutors
 3. Comminutors
 4. Grit chambers

Example Question:

Pre-chlorination is not used for:

- a) reduction of BOD
- b) aiding in sedimentation
- c) protection of plant structures
- d) disinfection

VI. Primary Treatment

- A. Theory of primary treatment
- B. Operation and maintenance
 - 1. Primary clarifiers
 - 2. Imhoff tanks

Example Question:

Which of the following is not a typical percentage for primary clarifier removal efficiency?

- a) Bacteria – 25% to 75%
- b) Settleable solids – 90% to 95%
- c) Total solids – 60% to 75%
- d) BOD—25% to 35%

VII. Secondary Treatment

- A. Theory of secondary treatment
- B. Operation and Maintenance
 - 1. Lagoons
 - 2. Slow sand filters
 - 3. RBC's
 - 4. Trickling filters
 - 5. Activated sludge units
 - 6. Secondary Sedimentation

Example Question:

Given the following data, describe the action necessary to make the F/M ratio 0.3 assuming 75% volatile solids in the mixed liquor.

Data: Daily flow = 2.0 MGD, Average primary effluent = 120 mg/l, Aeration tank capacity = 500,000 gallons, SVI = 80, RAS concentration = 9,000 mg/l, MLSS = 3,000 mg/l.

- a) Increase sludge wasting
- b) Increase return sludge rate
- c) Decrease sludge wasting
- d) No action is necessary

VIII. Sludge Handling

- A. Theory of sludge handling
- B. Operation and maintenance

1. Anaerobic digesters
2. Aerobic digesters
3. Sludge drying equipment
 - a. Coil or cloth filters
 - b. Sludge drying beds
 - c. Filter presses
 - d. Sludge lagoons
4. Sludge thickening equipment
 - a. Flotation devices
 - b. Gravity thickening devices
 - c. Chemical addition and/or conditioning
5. Sludge disposal
 - a. Land application
 - b. Landfill disposal
 - c. Incineration

Example Question:

The maximum temperature change an anaerobic digester should undergo per 24-hour Period should be:

- a) 0.5 degree F
- b) 2 degrees F
- c) 5 degrees F
- d) none of the above

IX. Tertiary Treatment

- A. Theory of tertiary treatment
- B. Operation and maintenance
 1. Polishing ponds
 2. Intermittent sand filters
 3. Rapid sand filters
 4. Microstrainers

Example Question:

Anaerobic conditions in an intermittent sand filter:

- a) Are normal
- b) Will have little effect on effluent quality
- c) Will have a significant effect on effluent quality
- d) Can be controlled by occasionally flooding filter

X. Disinfection

- A. Theory of disinfection
- B. Operation and maintenance
 - 1. Chlorination systems
 - 2. Other disinfection systems

Example Question:

Which of the following is most potent disinfecting agent?

- a) Chlorine
- b) hypochlorous acid
- c) chloramines
- d) All of the above disinfect equally

XI. Laboratory

A. Process control testing

- | | | |
|--------|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. BOD | 5. Settleable solids | 8. Alkalinity |
| 2. TSS | 6. Volatile solids | 9. F/M ratio |
| 3. COD | 7. Volatile acids | 10. Sludge age |
| 4. SVI | | |

B. NPDES testing

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. pH | 5. Ammonia |
| 2. BOD | 6. DO |
| 3. TSS | 7. Heavy metals |
| 4. Chlorine residual | |

Example Question:

If it takes 15 ml of 0.10 N H_2SO_4 to run a total alkalinity test using 100 ml sample, the total alkalinity, as $CaCO_3$ is:

- a) 7,500 mg/l
- b) 750 mg/l
- c) 75 mg/l
- d) 7.5 mg/l

XII. Safety and Health

- A. Clothing and apparel
- B. Machinery
- C. Chemical handling
- D. Laboratory
- E. Collection systems

Example Question:

Of the following items, what is the first thing the operator should do before he places his hand inside a pump volute to clear an obstruction?

- a) Make sure he has the proper tools to do the job
- b) Trip and lock out the circuit breaker
- c) Flush and drain the pump
- d) Put on rubber gloves

XIII. Record Keeping

- A. Plant operations
- B. Laboratory data
- C. Financial data
- D. Maintenance data
- E. Accident data

Example Question:

According to NPDES permit requirements, which of the following records are required to be kept?

- a) personnel records
- b) laboratory quality assurance records
- c) purchase orders
- d) annual operation and maintenance reports

XIV. Rules and Regulations

- A. 35 Ill. Adm. Code, Subtitle C: Water Pollution
- B. 35 Ill. Adm. Code Part 391 (Design Criteria for Sludge Application on Land)
- C. NPDES
- D. Local ordinances

Example Question:

A treatment facility is meeting effluent limits; however, it may be contributing to a violation of:

- a) nothing
- b) a BOD water quality standard
- c) a DO water quality standard
- d) a pH water quality standard

XV. Mathematics

- A. General math
- B. Process control math
- C. Laboratory math

Example Question:

Given the following data, calculate the influent flow rate.

Data: MLSS = 2,800 mg/l, MLVSS = 2,000 mg/l, Return sludge concentration = 9,200 mg/l, RAS flow rate 3.0 MGD.

- a) 5.8 MGD
- b) 6.9 MGD
- c) 7.6 MGD
- d) none of the above