



Program Guidance Document
Bureau of Water Quality
Division of Water Quality Management
V 1.3 2022

Wastewater Operator Certification Program
Training Contact Hour (TCH) Requirements for Certification Renewal¹

Certified wastewater operators must obtain eighteen (18) Training Contact Hours (TCHs) of DEP-approved wastewater continuing education training during each biennial (two-year) renewal period and provide documentation of completed TCHs to renew their certification². Training must be relevant to the operation, maintenance, safety, or management of a wastewater treatment plant.

Training must be presented by established providers including government agencies, professional associations, technical schools, colleges/universities, and private instructors through classes, workshops, conferences, webinars, and in-house sessions. All training must be at least one-hour in length. The same course (excluding safety) cannot be used for successive renewal cycles. TCHs cannot be carried over to the next renewal cycle. Multi-month training is credited for the renewal period in which the course ended. Online training is allowed in accordance with DEP policy³.

Table 1: Wastewater Operations TCH Acceptance Criteria

TCH Acceptance	Examples of Acceptable Topics⁴
One TCH per one-hour of training for topics relevant to Wastewater Treatment System Operations & Maintenance (O&M)	Equipment selection, maintenance, process control, instrumentation, laboratory, solids handling, odor control, wastewater regulations and compliance, industrial pretreatment, operating procedures, budgeting, infrastructure financing, asset management, emergency response, resiliency planning, GIS, plant computer applications, SCADA, engineering/design, energy efficiency, and cyber security.
Technical school, university, or correspondence course	One college level credit in chemistry, mathematics, biology, engineering or environmental sciences equals 10 TCH. 1 CEU = 10 hours of study
Organized wastewater plant tours	Maximum of 1 TCH per tour.

Safety and Treatment Plant Management Training - As an option, up to 6 of the 18 TCHs of required training per renewal cycle may be a combination of safety and/or management topics. Management training must have direct relevance to the operation of the wastewater plant. Human Resources (HR), utility policy, and general office training are not accepted.

Table 2: Safety and Treatment Plant Management Acceptance Criteria

Subject	Examples of Acceptable Topics
Safety	Lab Safety, Bloodborne Pathogens, HazCom, Confined Space, Lockout/Tagout, PPE, Hearing Protection, Electrical Safety, Fire Protection, Ladder and Forklift Safety, Ventilation, Material Handling, Machine Guarding, Work Surfaces, Hand & Power Tools, Work Zone Safety, Excavation, Trenching and Shoring, Defensive Driving ⁵
Treatment Plant Management	Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Communication, Conducting Meetings, Public Relations

Requests for approval must be sent to NEIWPCJ-JETCC and include course title, description, agenda, instructor bio, and relevancy to wastewater operation, maintenance, safety, or management.

¹ Ref:06-096 ch. 531. ²Spray Irrigation Treatment Systems-1 (SITS-1) operators must obtain 6 TCHs/renewal cycle.

³See <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/wwoperator/> for details. ⁴Septic system courses are only accepted for operators of municipal subsurface systems. ⁵Defensive driving courses are accepted if part of operator's duties and not solely for commuting purposes.