



## ANSWERS TO SOME COMMON QUESTIONS

### **Why do I need to renew my certificate?**

Changes in the wastewater treatment plant operator certification regulations (6 NYCRR Part 650) became effective on August 14, 1994. One of the changes is that your operator certificate is now valid for a period of five years. For renewal of your certificate, you will need to meet the renewal requirements and submit an application to NYSDEC.

### **What are the renewal requirements?**

During the five year period which precedes the expiration date of your certificate, you must complete a minimum number of contact hours of NYSDEC approved training related to the field of wastewater treatment. Only the most recent five (5) years of training will be considered for renewal. The number of contact hours you need depends on the Grade of your certificate: Grades 1 & 1A need 20 hours, Grades 2 & 2A need 40 hours, Grades 3 & 3A need 60 hours, and Grades 4 & 4A need 80 hours. For renewal of your certificate, you do not need to be working at a wastewater treatment plant.

### **What happens if I do not get the minimum renewal training contact hours or if I do not file an Application for Renewal of Certificate?**

Your certificate now has an expiration date. If you do not renew your certificate by the expiration date, your certificate will expire and the certificate is no longer valid - **you are not certified!** A new certificate will not be issued until we receive an application for renewal with documentation showing that you have received the minimum required contact hours of NYSDEC approved training. If the certificate is expired for one year or longer you will need to complete the renewal training requirement and take the next available certification exam for your grade certificate.

### **What kind of training is eligible for renewal contact hours?**

The training must be relevant to the operation, maintenance, or management of a wastewater treatment plant. Some examples include: operations, maintenance, management, laboratory, safety & first aid, collection systems, process control, computers, accounting, public relations, mathematics, biology, chemistry. In addition to NYSDEC sponsored seminars, training provided by other government agencies, colleges & universities, NYWEA and other professional associations, equipment vendors, consultants, or in-plant training coordinators & training officers may be eligible for renewal contact hours.

### **How can I find out if a course I plan to take has been approved by NYSDEC for renewal contact hours?**

The best way is to check the training notice or ask the course sponsor/provider for the NYSDEC Course Approval Number (RTC number). The RTC number is assigned by NYSDEC to courses which have been approved for renewal contact hours. The RTC number uniquely identifies a training course's content, date, location, and contact hours. If the course sponsor/provider can't tell you the RTC number for the course, then chances are it has not been approved.

### **Does NYSDEC need to approve the training before I can take it?**

NYSDEC approval is not needed before you attend any training program. The training can be approved for contact hours before or after you attend the training. *HOWEVER ALL TRAINING USED FOR MEETING THE RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS MUST BE APPROVED BY NYSDEC.*

### **How do I get NYSDEC to approve my training courses for renewal contact hours?**

The course sponsor/provider should submit a "Request for Approval of Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Renewal Training" (form 92-16-1) and a course agenda or time line to NYSDEC for review. Information about the renewal training approval process and the necessary forms can be found in the NYSDEC "Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification Renewal Training Guidelines". Copies of the Guidelines can be obtained by calling (518) 402-8177. You can also visit our Operator Outreach website (see below). It is recommended that you get your training approved for renewal contact hours before you submit your Application for Renewal of Certificate.

### **When should I submit my application for renewal?**

You can submit your application any time after you accumulate the minimum renewal training contact hours up until ninety (90) days before your current certificate expires. Since you can't "bank" hours in excess of the minimum, it is best for you to apply for renewal as soon as you reach the minimum hours required for your certificate grade. The new five year period does not begin until your current certificate expires. Renewing early gives you peace of mind and does not penalize you in any way.

### **Where do I send my application?**

Mail your completed Application For Renewal of Certificate, with copies of your training course completion notices attached, to: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Water Compliance Programs, 625 Broadway, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Albany, New York 12233-3506. There is no application fee for renewal of your operator certificate.

### **Who do I call if I have questions?**

If you have any questions about certificate renewal requirements, renewal training, or if you need help completing the renewal application form, please call the Facility Operations Assistance Section at (518) 402-8177. When calling, please indicate either your NYSDEC Region where you work or county of residence. You can also get all the renewal information at our Operator Outreach website - [www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dow/bwcp/foas\\_main.html](http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dow/bwcp/foas_main.html).

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATE

1. Enter your name: last name, first name, middle initial
- 2,3,4. Enter your mailing address, the county, and the NYSDEC Region that you live in.
- 5,6,7. Enter your operator certificate number, your certificate grade, and the expiration date. This information can be found on your certificate "wallet card".
8. Enter your day phone number.
- 9,10,11. Enter the name and SPDES Permit number of all the wastewater treatment plants at which you are currently working, listing your primary plant first. If you work at more than three plants, attach an additional sheet with the name(s) and SPDES number(s) of the remaining plants at which you work. For each plant, answer YES or NO to the question, are the chief operator? If you are not currently employed at a wastewater treatment plant, enter "none".
12. Enter the name or title of the training course or program. **IMPORTANT: YOU MUST ATTACH COMPLETION NOTICES FOR ALL COURSES YOU LIST ON THIS FORM.**
13. Enter the course sponsor or the name of the organization providing the training. If the training was developed or delivered by an in-plant trainer, enter "In-plant" in this box.
14. Enter the city and state where the training was held.
15. Enter the date that the training was completed.
16. If the training has been approved by NYSDEC for renewal training contact hours, enter the RTC number and the contact hours. Pre-approved training does not require a RTC approval number.
17. Enter the total contact hours of NYSDEC approved training.