



*Department of Health
Office of Drinking Water*

Policy

Title:	Waterworks Operator-in-Training Designation	Number: K.02
Procedure:	See Attached Procedure	
References:	RCW 70.119.050 Chapter 246-292 WAC	
Applies to:	Washington State Certified Waterworks Operators	
Contact:	Deni Gray, Program Manager	
Phone:	(360) 236-3140	E-mail: Deni.Gray@doh.wa.gov
Effective Date:	June 1, 2016	Review Date: June 1, 2018
Supersedes:	NA	
Approved:		Mike Means, Acting Director

Introduction

The Operator-in-Training (OIT) designation in chapter 246-292 WAC provides public water system purveyors flexibility in filling vacancies and gives waterworks professionals the opportunity to develop skills and grow in the profession. An OIT designation applies to all levels of operator certification. The OIT designation allows individuals to be certified after meeting the minimum education and water-related experience requirements and successfully completing the waterworks certification exam for the specified level of certification. The OIT designation is limited in that it may not be used to fill a mandatory position (certified operator in responsible charge).

The OIT designation protects public health by providing multiple avenues for public water system purveyors to fill needed waterworks operator positions with qualified staff. This improves public water system purveyors' ability to provide safe and reliable drinking water to their customers.

Background and Analysis

The Department of Health's (department) mission is to provide safe and reliable drinking water to the people in Washington State. The department is responsible for regulating certified waterworks operators (RCW 70.119.050). Certified waterworks operators are critical for the protection of public health and the maintenance of safe and reliable operations of water treatment and distribution facilities.

Minimum education, water-related experience, and operational experience requirements for each waterworks operator certification level are established in WAC 246-292-060, Tables 5, 6, and 7. The OIT designation is identified at the beginning of both Tables 5 and 6 and is intended to apply to all levels of operator certification. Each certification level above the most basic requires a period of experience in operating a water treatment plant or distribution system. This has been misinterpreted. This policy is necessary to clarify that a person may be an OIT at any certification level rather than only the first level

after meeting the specified education and water-related experience, and successfully completing the related exam.

The OIT designation is used when a person does not meet the operating experience requirement for a certification level. However, the OIT must meet the education and water-related experience requirements, and successfully pass the exam for the specified certification level. The department regards such an individual as having demonstrated the knowledge and proficiency needed to perform the on-site duties in a water treatment plant or distribution system for the specified certification level. Such individuals are eligible to fill vacancies for the certification level corresponding to the passed exam, but are not qualified to fill mandatory operator positions identified in WAC 246-292-020.

Once OITs fulfill the operational experience requirement for their certification level, they can apply to be upgraded to the full level of certification. The newly upgraded operator is then qualified to fill a mandatory operator position at that certification level.

Conclusion

The OIT designation in chapter 246-292 WAC provides public water system purveyors flexibility in filling vacancies and gives waterworks professionals the opportunity to develop skills and grow in the profession. An OIT designation applies to all levels of operator certification. The OIT designation allows individuals to be certified after meeting the minimum education and water-related experience requirements and successfully completing the waterworks certification exam for the specific level of certification. The OIT designation is limited in that it may not be used to fill a mandatory position (certified operator in responsible charge).

The OIT designation protects public health by providing multiple avenues for public water system purveyors to fill needed waterworks operator positions with qualified staff. This improves public water system purveyors' ability to provide safe and reliable drinking water to their customers.