

Proposed Changes for Wastewater System Operator Certification Program

DEQ will hold a Sept. 19 hearing on changes in fees for Operator Certification and Program Support

Public hearing

DEQ will hold a public hearing:

6:00 pm, Sept. 19, 2012
Clackamas Community College
Wilsonville Campus
29353 SW Town Center Loop E.
Room 211
Wilsonville, OR 97070

The hearing will begin with a brief overview of the proposed rule changes, followed by the opportunity for members of the public to provide oral and written comments. All comments will be recorded and reviewed by DEQ.

Background

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality proposes to increase wastewater system operator certification and program support fees. DEQ certifies wastewater system operators in Oregon as Grade I through Grade IV, depending upon the size and complexity of the wastewater system they operate. Oregon law requires owners of wastewater systems to have their systems under responsible control and supervision of certified operators. The rule amendments also include changes that reflect current program practices and improve program efficiencies.

Additional proposed changes include:

- Establish small wastewater system certification
- Revise system supervisor compliance requirement
- Clarify “acceptable operating experience” language
- Revise exam scheduling language and re-exam time frame
- Revise standing advisory committee language.

DEQ has the statutory authority to address this issue under ORS 448. These rules implement ORS 448.405-448.430.

Why are rule changes needed?

The last comprehensive rule for fee structure and increase for the program was conducted in 2002. Over the last 10 years, program costs increased, creating revenue shortfall for the program. This rule change is needed to increase fees to cover operating costs in order continue administration of the program.

What is the objective of this rulemaking?

The proposed rule amendments would revise and increase operator certification fees and wastewater system owner program support fees to cover the costs of administering the program. Proposed changes also include revised language regarding small wastewater system certification exam and re-exam scheduling, compliance requirement for system supervisor, experience requirement, and advisory committee.

Who may be affected?

The proposed changes in DEQ’s operator certification fee will affect individual operators and system owners. Individual operators are responsible for obtaining and maintaining their certification and license renewal. Local, state, federal government and private entities that own and operate domestic wastewater systems under the national pollutant discharge elimination system or water pollution control facility permits issued by DEQ are also affected by the fee increase.

How was this proposal developed?

DEQ convened an advisory committee with representatives from the various types of wastewater system owners and operators to solicit input on the proposed fee increase.

Where can I get more information?

You can review copies of the documents used in developing this rulemaking proposal at DEQ’s office at 2020 SW 4th Ave., Portland, OR 97201. To schedule a review appointment, contact Janice Schreiber at 503-229-5263.

You can view additional information related to this proposed rulemaking at “Proposed Rule Revisions”

www.deq.state.or.us/regulations/rulesandlaws.htm

The materials include:

- Proposed Rule changes
- Statement of Need and Fiscal Impact
- Land Use Evaluation Statement
- Relationship to Federal Requirements



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Water Quality Division

811 SW 6th Avenue
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800-452-4011

Fax: 503-229-6957

Contact: Etsegenet Belete
belete.etsegenet@deq.state.
or.us

www.oregon.gov/DEQ/



How to comment

Send comments on the proposed rulemaking prior to the comment deadline of 5 p.m., Tuesday Sept. 25, 2012 to Etsegenet Belete, Oregon DEQ, Northwest Region Water Quality 2020 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 400 Portland OR 97201 Fax to 503-229-6957 or email to belete.etsenget@deq.state.or.us

For more information call Etsegenet Belete at 503-229-5349 or toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, x5349

It is not necessary to attend a hearing in order to comment. Written comments received prior to the deadline are treated equally with oral comments.

Email comments will be acknowledged immediately. If there is a delay between servers, emails may not be received before the deadline.

How will rules be adopted?

DEQ will prepare a response to comments received during the public hearing and comment period and may modify the proposed rules. DEQ plans to recommend that the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission adopt the rules at the Dec. 6, 2012 EQC meeting. DEQ will notify persons of the time and place for final EQC action if they submit comments during the hearing or comment period or request to be placed on DEQ's email list for this rulemaking.

Alternative formats/accommodations

Please notify DEQ of any special physical or language accommodations needed for the hearings as far in advance as possible. To make these arrangements, contact DEQ communications and Outreach at 503-229-5696 or call toll-free in Oregon at 800-452-4011; fax to 503-229-6762; or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.

People with hearing impairments may call 711