

## **Kansas Department of Health and Environment COVID-19 Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Renewal and Exam Policies**

**Effective: March 17, 2020**

### Adjusted Certification Renewal Policy

Continuing education is a vital component of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's (KDHE) Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Program. K.A.R. 28-16-34 requires all Kansas certified operators complete a minimum number of continuing education hours to qualify for certification renewal. The classification of the operator determines the continuing education requirements. Operators with a Small System certification are required to obtain 5 hours of continuing credit every 2 years. Classes I through IV must complete 10 hours of credit every 2 years.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic KDHE has temporarily adjusted the regulatory requirements for operator certification renewal for some operators.

The adjusted policy applies to operators that meet the following criteria:

- Operators with renewal deadlines in the months of March, April, May, or June 2020 (NOTE: Additional months may be added based on COVID-19 impacts) and;
- Operators that **do not** have the required number of continuing education hours needed for renewal.

Operators that meet the above listed criteria will have until **December 31, 2020** to acquire the needed hours for renewal and submit the standard fee (\$20.00) to avoid a lapsed certification. KDHE will waive the \$25.00 reinstatement fee normally charged for lapsed certifications. The standard regulatory requirements including the lapsed certification fee will apply to operators that miss the December 31 deadline.

This adjusted schedule **does not** apply to operators that have obtained the required continuing education hours for certification renewal. Operators that have obtained the requisite hours will renew their certifications as required by the current regulations. Operators that fail to renew by the deadline provided in the renewal notice will be required to pay the lapsed reinstatement certificate fee as outlined in K.A.R. 28-16-35.

Allowing for disruption by the COVID-19 pandemic, KDHE will continue to mail renewal notices to all operators approximately 60 days prior to the certificate renewal date. These notices will indicate how many continuing education hours are needed for renewal. KDHE will automatically extend the renewal deadline for operators that meet the above listed criteria. Operators that have obtained the required continuing education hours should renew their certificate according to the instructions provided in the renewal notice.

## Adjusted Exam Policy

Every public water supply system and wastewater treatment facility in the State of Kansas must be under the supervision of a KDHE certified operator (K.S.A. 65-4510). All Kansas certified operators are required to pass a written examination with a score of 70% or higher (K.A.R. 28-16-32). KDHE is required by regulation to conduct examinations at least twice per year, however, KDHE has historically provided approximately 8 exam opportunities per year.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the State of Kansas restricts public gatherings to no more than 50 people and requires social separation of at least 6 feet at events fewer than 50 participants. As a result, certification exams scheduled on or after March 26, 2020 have been or may be cancelled. It is unknown when exams will resume on a regular schedule.

The following adjustments will apply to the KDHE examination process:

- K.A.R 28-16-33 establishes the requirements for a water or wastewater utility to use an Operator-in-Training (OIT) to serve as the operator in responsible charge. OITs are required to take and pass an examination within 18 months of the certificate issuance. OITs with certificates that expire in March, April, May or June will have until **December 31, 2020** to take and pass the appropriate level of exam. (NOTE: Additional months may be added based on the COVID-19 impacts).
- Fees submitted to KDHE for exams that are cancelled will be applied to a future exam date.
- Water or wastewater utilities that lose an operator or have classification changes will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by KDHE.

Given the uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic KDHE reserves the right to change the policies stated in this document. KDHE will make every effort to notify operators and utilities when changes are made. All COVID-19 related information is posted on KDHE's COVID-19 Resource Center webpage:

<https://govstatus.egov.com/coronavirus>