

## **NDEQ Operator Certification Program Newsletter October 2009**

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NDEQ Website: <http://deq.ne.gov/>

### **CONGRATULATIONS RUSS**

Russell Irwin retired August 26, 2009, from the NDEQ after 35 years of service. Russ was very knowledgeable about all things wastewater related and we will miss his expertise. We are in the process of hiring a replacement for Russ. In the meantime please call either Mary Wilson at 402.471.4285 or Gary Buttermore at 402.471.8283 with any operator certification questions.

### **Certification Fee Change Proposed**

NDEQ is proposing changes to Title 197, *Rules and Regulations for the Certification of Wastewater Treatment Operators in Nebraska*. The proposed fee change would increase the fee for the two-year operator certification from the current \$150 to \$200. Certification fees last changed in 2002. The increase in fees is needed to cover ongoing program costs which have increased significantly since then.

Operator certification is needed to help ensure that operators are properly qualified and that facilities know who has appropriate credentials. Millions of dollars are spent each year in Nebraska on water supply and wastewater infrastructure and its sustainability. Failure to maintain the wastewater infrastructure will result in pollution and water quality problems.

Information on the proposal will be available on the NDEQ website. We are planning to present the proposed Title 197

changes to the Environmental Quality Council at the next schedule meeting of the EQC on December 4, 2009.

### **Citizenship Attestation Now Required**

On April 8, 2009, the Governor signed into law Legislative Bill 403 (LB 403). This law (effective October 1, 2009) requires state agencies to verify the lawful presence in the United States of any person who has applied for public benefits that are administered by that agency. For the purposes of the law, public benefits are defined to mean “any grant, contract, loan, professional license, commercial license . . . or any other similar benefit” provided by a governmental agency. This includes the professional certifications, permits, and subdivision approvals issued by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and include Wastewater Treatment Facility Operator Certificates (initial certification and renewal).

You must complete and include the Attestation Form when you submit your application for operator certification or renewal to NDEQ. Failure to complete and submit the Attestation Form will delay your application. Your cooperation is appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact the Department. The Attestation Form will be included with your renewal application and will be available on the NDEQ website.

### **Training and Exam Schedule**

A schedule for NDEQ operator certification training and testing had not been set yet for 2010 when this newsletter was written. Information on any NDEQ training and testing will be posted on our website as soon as it becomes available, along with current information on approved continuing education programs.

## **Certification Renewal**

When you get your next Record of Continuing Education from NDEQ with your renewal notification, please take a few minutes and look it over. A list of the WWTFs we have a record of you operating will be on the upper right part of the form. If there are missing dates (start dates or end dates) here or other incorrect or missing details elsewhere on the form, please either write in the correct information or contact us with the correction. And as noted above, please be sure to fill out and return the Attestation Form with your renewal. We appreciate your help making sure the information we have is correct and up to date.

The Record of Continuing Education lists what NDEQ has on file for you. If you have taken any other training that is not shown on the form, include a copy of the certificate you were given at the training or note it on the back of the form when you submit your renewal. Please note that the form we send out is a courtesy to you and that you are ultimately responsible for keeping track of your training.

## **Continuing Education Records Now on NDEQ Website**

We have added a new feature on the NDEQ website that you might find useful. You can now look up the hours of continuing education NDEQ has on file for you:

1. start at the NDEQ website (<http://deq.ne.gov/>),
2. on the left-hand side of the page click the "Licenses & Certification" tab, and
3. then click on "Operator Certification (wastewater)".

The hours we have on record for you will be listed next to your operator certification number. Please contact us if you have any questions.

**IMPORTANT PROGRAM INFORMATION**

**84-40-29**

**NDEQ Operator Certification  
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