



## **SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYING CERTIFIED WATER AND WASTEWATER OPERATORS**

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The North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Municipal Facilities, is responsible for implementing North Dakota's water and wastewater operator certification requirements as set forth under NDCC Ch. 23-26 and its implementing regulations, NDAC Art. 33-19. Under these requirements, certain systems must employ appropriately certified water and wastewater operators. Appropriately certified refers to certification at a grade corresponding to the class of facility being operated, which is based on the level of treatment provided and/or the population served by the system. This document describes which systems are required to employ certified operators.

### **Water Systems**

Except in certain situations, public water systems are required to employ appropriately certified water treatment and water distribution system operators. Certification requirements are based on public water system type, type of water source(s) used, type and degree of treatment provided, and size and complexity of the water distribution/storage system.

A public water system provides water for human consumption through pipes or any other constructed delivery system that has at least 15 service connections or regularly serves at least 25 individuals 60 or more days out of the year. A public water system is either a community water system, a nontransient noncommunity water system, or a transient noncommunity water system. Community water systems serve year-round residents and include cities, rural water systems, and mobile home parks. Nontransient noncommunity water systems serve at least 25 of the same persons more than six months per year and include schools, businesses, and industries. Transient noncommunity water systems primarily provide service to transient populations and include bars, restaurants, hotels, campgrounds and rest areas. Water source types include groundwater, surface water, and groundwater under the direct influence of surface water (GWUDISW). GWUDISW is groundwater with significant occurrence of organisms associated with surface water.

Operator certification requirements for water systems are as follows.

- **Community Water Systems (All Water Sources)**  
A certified water treatment operator is required for a system that treats its own source(s) or that treats water obtained from another regulated public water system. All community water systems are required to have a certified water distribution system operator.
- **Nontransient Noncommunity Water Systems (All Water Sources)**  
A certified water treatment operator is required for a system that treats its own source(s) or that treats water obtained from another regulated public water system. A certified water distribution system operator may be required based on the size and complexity of the water distribution/storage system.
- **Transient Noncommunity Water Systems (Surface Water or GWUDISW)**  
A certified water treatment operator is required for a system that treats its own source(s) or that treats water obtained from another regulated public water system. A certified water distribution system operator may be required based on the size and complexity of the water distribution/storage system.
- **Transient Noncommunity Water Systems (Groundwater Only and Not GWUDISW)**  
A certified water treatment operator is required **ONLY IF** the system provides treatment **beyond** processes involving simple chemical addition and minor operation control (beyond processes such as disinfection, fluoridation, sequestration, and corrosion control). This applies both to systems that treat their own source(s) and to systems that treat water obtained from another regulated public water system. Based on the size and complexity of the water distribution/storage system, a certified water distribution operator **may** be required **ONLY IF** a certified water treatment operator is required.

### **Wastewater Systems**

Appropriately certified operators are required for any wastewater treatment plant or wastewater collection system which serves a population equivalent (PE) of 25 or more persons. There is one exception to this requirement. Certified operators are **not** required for systems that use wastewater stabilization ponds or other non-mechanical wastewater treatment plants and serve PEs of less than 500 persons. Operators of such systems can choose and are encouraged to become certified. A PE of 25 and 500 persons corresponds to a daily biochemical oxygen demand contribution of 4.25 and 85 pounds, respectively.

### **Questions and More Information**

Questions and requests for more information on North Dakota's water and wastewater operator certification requirements may be directed to Craig Bartholomay, Certification Officer, Division of Municipal Facilities, at 701.328.6626 or [cbarthol@nd.gov](mailto:cbarthol@nd.gov).