



Water and Wastewater Works Advisory Board

State of Alaska
Department of Environmental Conservation

Policy Statement 2025-01 Reciprocity Requests

Background

Reciprocity is the ability to obtain certification in one state based on a certification issued by another state without retaking and passing a certification exam. The Water and Wastewater Operator Certification and Training regulations at 18 AAC 74 do not address the issue of reciprocity. The Department has been using Alaska Statute (AS) 46.30.100 for guidance when reviewing reciprocity requests.

AS 46.30.100 states, “Certificates may be issued without examination in the comparable classification to an applicant who holds a certificate in a state, territory, or possession of the United States, if its certification requirements and examinations are comparable to those of this state and if reciprocal privileges are granted to operators certified in this state.”

Introduction

The Department requested that the Board discuss the issue, review the Department’s existing policies for reviewing applications for reciprocity, and issue a Board policy for reviewing applications.

Discussion

Operator certification requirements vary widely from state to state. As such, the Board discussed the necessity of the Department reviewing applications for reciprocity on a case-by-case basis. At the same time, the Board emphasized the importance of the Department using consistent criteria when evaluating reciprocity and ensuring that applicants for reciprocity possess the same examination, experience, and education criteria as those required for comparable levels of Alaskan certification.

Policy

The Department will apply the following criteria and procedures when reviewing applications for reciprocity:

- The operator's current certificate in the other state must have been obtained by meeting experience and education requirements and passing a certification exam in that state.
- The certification exam should be similar in content as the Alaska certification exam with a comparable passing score;
 - Preferably an exam produced by Water Professionals International (WPI),
 - If not an WPI exam, then the exam should contain at least 100 multiple choice questions;
 - If fewer than 100 multiple choice questions, the Department will request from the other state a copy of the exam to review
 - If the other state will not allow for a review, then reciprocity cannot be considered since the exam is not comparable.
 - Read exams are not allowed.
- The Department will compare Alaska's and the other state's certification requirements to determine what level of certification is the closest match, based on experience and education requirements.
- If the certificate was issued by a trade organization, e.g., organization affiliated with AWWA or WEF, then the Department will deny reciprocity because the certificate was not issued by a state, territory, or possession of the United States.
- If not eligible through reciprocity but an operator has taken and passed a 2017, 2019, or more recent version of the standardized WPI exam within the last three years, then the Department will review/verify the operator's experience and education and issue certification based on 18 AAC 74.050. However, the following conditions must also be met:
 - The score must match Alaska's required passing score;
 - The exam must be a 2017, 2019, or more recent standardized WPI exam; and
 - The exam must have been administered per Alaska exam administration procedures, i.e. closed book, a time limit of 3 hours, and no oral exams
- The Department will not count any operator experience that cannot be verified.
- The Department will deny reciprocity requests for certificates from other states that were obtained through reciprocity.
- If the other state does not grant reciprocity for Alaskan certifications, then the Department will not grant reciprocity.

Adopted this eighteenth day of March 2025

/Mark Buggins/ Mark Buggins

Chair, Water and Wastewater Works Advisory Board

(Effective March 18, 2025)