

California - Water Treatment

Operator Exam Registration

American Water College Support
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 (661) 874-1655



Grade	Minimum Qualifications for Examination	Minimum Qualifications for Certification After Passing Examination
T1	Must possess a high school diploma or equivalent (GED)	Successful completion of the Grade T1 examination within the three years prior to submitting certification application.
T2	High School Diploma or GED* One 3-unit (or 36-hour) course of specialized training covering the fundamentals of drinking water treatment.	Successful completion of the Grade T2 examination within the three years prior to submitting certification application.
T3	High School Diploma or GED Two 3-unit (or 36-hour) courses of specialized training that include at least one course in drinking water treatment and a second course in either drinking water treatment, distribution, or wastewater treatment.	Successful completion of the Grade T3 examination within the three years prior to submitting certification application At least one year of operator experience working as a certified T2 operator at a T2 facility or higher. This may be substituted with (3) below. At least one additional year of operator experience working as a certified treatment operator. This may be substituted with (1), (2), or (4) below.
T4	A valid grade T3 operator certificate. Three 3-unit (or 36-hour) courses of specialized training that include at least two courses in the fundamentals of drinking water treatment and a third course in either drinking water treatment, distribution, or wastewater treatment	Successful completion of the Grade T4 examination within the three years prior to submitting the application for certification At least one year of operator experience working as shift or chief operator, while a certified T3 operator at a T3 facility or higher. This may be substituted with (3) below. At least three additional years of operator experience working as a certified treatment operator. This may be substituted with (1) or (4) below.
T5	A valid grade T4 operator certificate. Four 3-unit (or 36-hour) courses of specialized training that include at least two courses in drinking water treatment and two additional courses in either drinking water treatment, distribution, or wastewater treatment.	Successful completion of the Grade T5 examination within the three years prior to submitting the application for certification At least two years of operator experience working as a shift or chief operator, while a certified T4 operator at a T4 facility or higher. There are no substitutions. At least three additional years of operator experience working as a certified treatment operator. This may be substituted with (1) or (4) below

*High school/GED equivalency for T1 and T2 ONLY can be fulfilled with successful completion of the Basic Small Water System Operations course developed by the State of California OR 1 year as an operator of a facility that required an understanding of chemical feeds, hydraulic systems, and pumps.

Experience substitutions for certification, as referenced above.

1) A relevant degree earned at an accredited academic institution may be substituted as follows:

- Associate's Degree or Certificate in Water or Wastewater Technology that includes at least 15 units of physical, chemical, or biological science may be used to fulfill 1 year of operator experience.
- Bachelor's Degree in engineering or in physical, chemical, or biological sciences (e.g Biology, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Microbiology, Public Health, or Sanitary Engineering) may be used to fulfill 1.5 years of operator experience.
- Master's Degree in the above-mentioned fields in (b) may be used to fulfill 2 years of operator experience.

2) A certified operator may substitute, on a day-for-day basis, experience gained while working with lead responsibility for water quality related projects of research (e.g. pilot plant).

3) If an applicant has a Bachelor's or Master's of Science degree, completion of a comprehensive operator training program, pursuant to Section 63800(h), may be substituted for the required experience.

4) Experience gained as a certified wastewater treatment operator may be used to substitute up to 2 years of the experience requirement. Wastewater treatment operator experience is credited on a two-for-one basis (i.e. 2 months in wastewater=1 month in drinking water).

You can find the full list of requirements and education/experience substitutions in the [CA Drinking Water-Chapter 13 Code](#)

California - Water Distribution

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Grade	Minimum Qualifications for Examination	Minimum Qualifications for Certification After Passing Examination
D1	High School Diploma or GED*	Successful completion of the Grade D1 examination within the three years prior to submitting certification application
D2	High School Diploma / GED Equivalency* One 3-unit (or 36-hour) course of specialized training covering the fundamentals of water supply principles	Successful completion of the Grade D2 examination within the three years prior to submitting certification application
D3	Current D2 certification Two 3-unit (or 36-hour) courses of specialized training that includes at least one course in the fundamentals of water supply principles and a second course in either drinking water distribution, treatment, or wastewater treatment	Successful completion of the Grade D3 examination within the three years prior to submitting certification application AND At least one year of operator experience working as a certified D2 operator for a D2 system or higher AND At least one additional year of operator experience working as a distribution operator. This may be substituted with (1) or (2) below
D4	Current D3 certification Three 3-unit (or 36-hour) courses of specialized training that includes at least two courses in the fundamentals of water supply principles and a third course in either drinking water distribution, treatment, or wastewater treatment.	Successful completion of the Grade D4 examination within the three years prior to submitting the application for certification AND At least one year of operator experience working as a certified D3 operator for a D3 system or higher AND At least three additional years of operator experience working as a distribution operator. This may be substituted with (1) or (2) below
D5	Current D4 certification Four 3-unit (or 36-hour) courses of specialized training that includes at least two courses in the fundamentals of water supply principles and two additional courses in either drinking water distribution, treatment, or wastewater treatment	Successful completion of the Grade D5 examination within the three years prior to submitting the application for certification AND At least two years of operator experience working as a certified D4 operator for a D4 or D5 system AND At least three additional years of operator experience working as a distribution operator. This may be substituted with (1) or (2) below

*High school/GED equivalency for D1 and D2 ONLY can be fulfilled with successful completion of the Basic Small Water System Operations course developed by the State of California OR 1 year as an operator of a piping system that includes pumps, valves, and storage tanks.

Experience substitutions for certification, as referenced above.

1) A relevant degree earned at an accredited academic institution may be substituted as follows:

- Associate's Degree or Certificate in Water or Wastewater Technology that includes at least 15 units of physical, chemical, or biological science may be used to fulfill 1 year of operator experience.
- Bachelor's Degree in engineering or in physical, chemical, or biological sciences (e.g. Biology, Chemical Engineering, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Microbiology, Public Health, or Sanitary Engineering) may be used to fulfill 1.5 years of operator experience.
- Master's Degree in the above-mentioned fields in (b) may be used to fulfill 2 years of operator experience.

2) A certified operator may substitute, on a day-for-day basis, 1 additional year of operator experience working as a distribution operator with experience gained while working with lead responsibility for water quality or quantity related projects or research

You can find the full list of requirements and education/experience substitutions in the [CA Drinking Water-Chapter 13 Code](#)

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Grade	Minimum Qualifications for Examination	Minimum Qualifications for Certification After Passing Examination
I	High school diploma or equivalent and 6 educational points (60 training hours) a) A) 1 year of full-time qualifying experience	1 year of full-time qualifying experience
II	a) High school diploma or equivalent and 9 educational points b) High school diploma or equivalent and 12 educational points c) Associate's degree, a higher degree, or a minimum of 60 college semester units, including a minimum of 15 semester units of science courses	a) 18 months of full-time qualifying experience as a Grade I operator b) 2 years of full-time qualifying experience c) 1 year of full-time qualifying experience
III	a) High school diploma or equivalent and 12 educational points b) High school diploma or equivalent and 18 educational points c) Associate's degree or a minimum of 60 college semester units, including a minimum of 15 semester units of science courses d) Bachelor's degree or a higher degree, including a minimum of 30 semester units of science courses	a) 3 years of full-time qualifying experience as a Grade II operator b) 4 years of full-time qualifying experience c) 2 years of full-time qualifying experience d) 1 year of full-time qualifying experience
IV	a) High school diploma or equivalent and 32 educational points b) Associate's degree or a minimum of 60 college semester units, including a minimum of 15 semester units of science courses c) Bachelor's degree or a higher degree, including a minimum of 30 semester units of science courses d) Valid registration as a chemical, civil, or mechanical engineer issued by the California Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors or by another state, territory, or Indian tribe	a) 2 years of full-time qualifying experience b) 4 years of full-time qualifying experience c) 3 years of full-time qualifying experience d) 2 years of full-time qualifying experience
V	a) High school diploma or equivalent and 48 educational points b) Associate's degree or a minimum of 60 college semester units, including a minimum of 15 semester units of science courses c) Bachelor's degree or a higher degree, including a minimum of 30 semester units of science courses d) Valid registration as a chemical, civil, or mechanical engineer issued by the California Board for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors or by another state, a territory, or an Indian tribe	a) 10 years full-time qualifying experience b) 6 years of full-time qualifying experience c) 5 years of full-time qualifying experience d) 4 years of full-time qualifying experience

Notes:

Applicants must take and pass the Office of Operator Certification Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Examination before applying for Certification

There are several options for certification as indicated by options a) b) c) and d). You may choose any one of those options for certification and will not need to complete all options for each certification or examination level.

You can find the full list of requirements and education/experience substitutions in the [CA Wastewater-Title 23 Code](#)

California - Wastewater Collections

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Grade	Minimum Qualifications for Examination	Minimum Qualifications for Certification After Passing Examination
1	Completed operator application and appropriate fees No experience required (1 year of experience in the vocation is recommended)	Passing score for the appropriate license level
2	Completed operator application and appropriate fees 2 years of experience in the vocation	Passing score for the appropriate license level
3	Completed operator application and appropriate fees CSM Grade 2 certification in good standing 4 years of experience in the vocation OR 3 years with a bachelor's degree or a water/wastewater associate degree	Passing score for the appropriate license level
4	Completed operator application and appropriate fees CSM Grade 3 certification in good standing 6 years of experience in the vocation OR 5 years with a bachelor's degree or a water/wastewater associate degree 1 year experience supervising others in the vocation, crew lead experience qualifies	Passing score for the appropriate license level

*Candidates must submit an application and be approved before they can schedule an exam. Once the application is processed, candidates are notified of their status via email.