

Operator Certification Requirements

Every public water supply and wastewater treatment facility in Kansas is required by Kansas regulation to have a certified operator in responsible charge of the system. Most systems in Kansas that have more than one employee working with the water or wastewater system also require additional employees to obtain certification.

Having more than one person certified helps maintain compliance

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with the regulation if another person who is certified by Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) leaves. Having the only certified operator walk out leaves a utility in a bind. The first of not having a certified operator is whether the water being delivered to the customers is safe and meets standards. A wastewater system would be concerned that the waste is properly treated.

Another option is to hire a Contract Operator. In the above case the operator for six systems is not listed as a contract operator with KDHE. An agreement was made between that person and each system. It's what works for them. KDHE does have a listing of contract operators on their web site. To find that listing go to the following web site. <https://www.kdheks.gov/water/www.html>. Find the Certified Operator Database and click on those words. They have a square box in front of and behind the words that flash different colors.

On the next page that opens you will need to agree to the terms before being allowed to advance further. You can then pick between Wastewater Operator Search or Drinking Water Operator Search to search for operators. On this screen you can input information on individuals to find out how many credit hours have been obtained and when the certification is supposed to be renewed by.

If you type in only the last name, then click on "submit", the information displayed lists all those who have the same last name. There are several different ways to search for a person. However, the viewer can also see everyone listed by leaving every field blank and clicking on the submit button. This displays everyone listed on the KDHE website as an operator and even former operator. It gives the classification they presently have and lists they system they are the operator for. In the last column it lists whether or not the person is "Active" or not. If there is a "Yes" in the far right-hand column behind a person's name, then that person has maintained

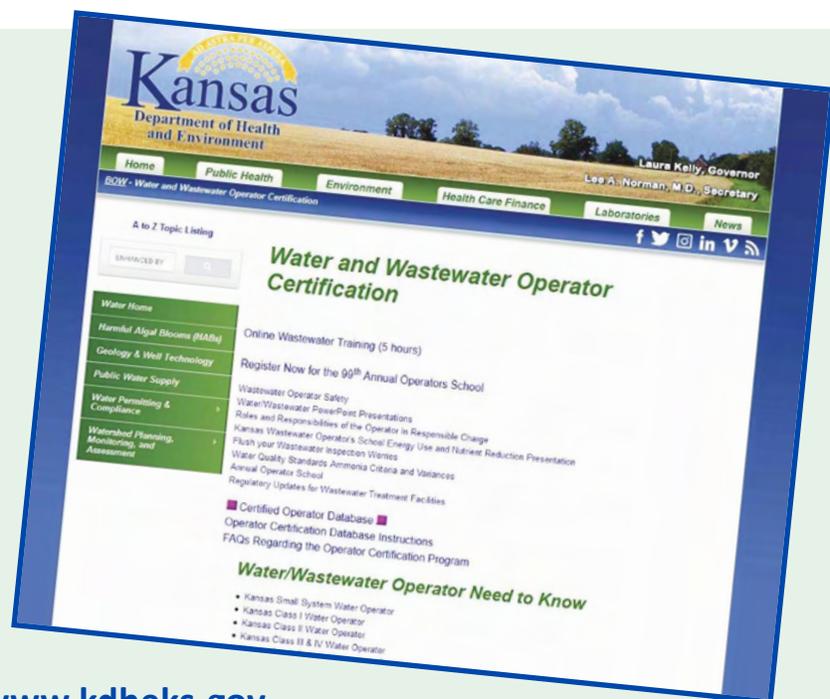
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certification. If there is a "No", then you know that person has not maintained certification.

To find a contract operator, go to the Drinking Water Certified Operator Search Form page. On the lower right-hand side of the fields to search for it has Contract: In the field there is a dropdown arrow. When you click on that arrow highlight the word YES. Then click submit. This displays all those that have registered with KDHE as a contract operator. Again, check to make sure that person is Active and has a Yes in the far-right hand column. The entire listing will display and then the information to

determine if a contract operator is close to their area can be checked.

In the event a system finds itself without an operator, a contract operator may be the best solution to help out for a short time or even longer depending on the system needs. However, everyone should keep in mind that the permit holder for the water system or wastewater treatment facility is responsible and liable for complying with the permit. This is true whether the system has a full-time employee or contract operator. A clear understanding of what is required is essential to all parties involved.



KDHE Requirements for Water Supply Systems and Wastewater Treatment Facilities

System Classification
I. Water Supply System

Class	Description	Population Served
Small System	1. Distribution System Only 2. Chlorination of Groundwater Only	All <501
I	1. Chlorination of Groundwater Only 2. Treatment of Groundwater*	501-1,500 <501
II	1. Chlorination of Groundwater Only 2. Treatment of Groundwater* 3. Treatment of Surface Water	1,501-5,000 501-2,500 <2,501
III	1. Chlorination of Groundwater Only 2. Treatment of Groundwater or Surface Water	5,001-20,000 2,501-10,000
IV	1. Chlorination of Groundwater Only 2. Treatment of Groundwater or Surface Water	>20,000 >10,000

II. Wastewater Treatment Facility

Class	Description	Population Served
Small System	1. Nonoverflowing Wastewater Ponds	All
I	1. Any Secondary Facility** 2. Overflowing Wastewater Ponds	<1,001 All
II	1. Any Secondary Facility**	1,001-5,000
III	1. Any Secondary Facility** 2. Advanced or Specialized Facility***	5,001-25,000 <=5,000
IV	1. Any Secondary Facility** 2. Advanced or Specialized Facility***	>25,000 >5,000 *

* Includes iron and manganese removal; softening; membrane filtration; coagulation, sedimentation and filtration; recarbonation; and chemical addition (other than chlorine)

** Biological treatment including; trickling filters, rotating biological contactors, and activated sludge

*** Includes chemical, biological, or physical treatment to provide nutrient removal beyond secondary treatment; or effluent clarification

According to KDHE's website there are 2,517 Active Certified Water Operators in Kansas.

The breakdown is as follows:

- Operator-In-Training – 30
 - Small System Operator – 573
 - Class I Operator – 483
 - Class II Operator – 498
 - Class III Operator – 113
 - Class IV Operator – 497
 - Active Operator without noted classification – 323
- Included in the above totals are 126 Contract Operators.

(Note: some Contract Operators work for more than one system)

Obviously having another operator is beneficial to each water or wastewater system.

Sadly, an operator of a south-central Kansas water system recently passed. Without a second certified operator that system was scurrying to find another operator or hire someone without the certification and obtain an Operator-In-Training certificate from the KDHE. In this case a former operator agreed to help out until the system is able to find someone full-time.

Obviously having another operator is beneficial to each water or wastewater system. However, this is not always practical. Some small systems do not have the resources available to hire a full-time operator, or even a part-time operator. Sharing operators has helped some systems but there needs to be a clear understanding of the responsibilities. Sharing an operator typically occurs between two systems; the person is listed as the certified operator between both systems. I have found one individual who is listed as the certified operator for six systems. Granted these are small systems but the requirements to have a certified operator are still valid for each system.

Greg Duryea started work for KRWA in 1993 as Technical Assistant. He holds a Class I water certification and is the certified operator for Sycamore Springs Resort in Brown County. Greg is Assistant General Manager at KRWA.



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