

# Wastewater Operator Certification Program Switches to Computer-based Testing

On June 1, 2009, wastewater operator certification testing will change from a pencil-and-paper exam to a computer-based exam. Wastewater operators will be able to take their certification exam at several testing sites in Washington, Oregon, and locations nationwide.

Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. (AMP) will provide the testing sites for the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) computer-based exam.

### **Q: Why switch to computer-based exams?**

**A:** The Wastewater Operator Certification (OpCert) Program is switching to computer-based exams to make our program more efficient and cost effective. We believe computer-based testing will benefit operators because it:

- Offers more exam dates.
- Eliminates the application deadline.
- Gives immediate exam results and a diagnostic profile.
- Makes certification for out-of-state operators easier.
- Eliminates the retake application fee.
- Provides a better testing environment.
- Helps keep program costs down.

### **Q: Does this mean the exam is going to change?**

**A:** No. We are still using the Association of Boards of Certification standardized wastewater treatment exam. The passing score is still 70 percent.

### **Q: Will the application deadline change?**

**A:** Yes. With computer-based exams there is no application deadline. However, the application submittal process allows OpCert staff up to 60 days to review and approve the application for testing.

### MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Wastewater Operator Certification Program website at:

[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/program/s/wq/wastewater/op\\_cert/index.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/program/s/wq/wastewater/op_cert/index.html)

Visit the Association of Boards of Certification website at:

<http://ww2.abccert.org/>

Visit Applied Measurement Professionals website at:

<http://www.goamp.com>

### Contact information:

Poppy Carre  
Wastewater Operator  
Certification Program  
360-407-6449  
1-800-633-6193 toll free in  
Washington  
[poca461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:poca461@ecy.wa.gov)

Melinda Wilson  
Wastewater Operator  
Certification Program  
360-407-6889  
[mewi461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:mewi461@ecy.wa.gov)

### Special accommodations:

To ask about the availability of this document in a version for the visually impaired, call the Water Quality Program at 360-407-6401. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

**Q: How much does the computer-based exam cost?**

**A:** The cost ranges from \$135 to \$152 depending on the exam. These costs include Ecology’s application fee, ABC’s exam fee, and AMP’s testing service fee.

	<u>Ecology fee</u>	<u>ABC fee</u>	<u>AMP fee</u>	<u>Total</u>
Operator in Training	\$50	\$26	\$59	\$135
Group I	\$50	\$26	\$59	\$135
Group II	\$50	\$26	\$59	\$135
Group III	\$50	\$26	\$76	\$152
Group IV	\$50	\$26	\$76	\$152

**Q: How do I pay for the exam?**

**A:** Send the \$50 application fee to Ecology with your completed application. AMP will collect both ABC’s exam fee and AMP’s testing service fee when you schedule your exam. You can pay AMP online with a credit card or by mail with a company check or money order payable to AMP. AMP will not accept personal checks, purchase orders, or vouchers. AMP charges a \$25 fee for any returned company check.

**Q: Can I pay at the exam site?**

**A:** No. You must pay all fees before you can take your exam.

**Q: How do I apply to take the exam?**

**A:** The application process did not change. Ecology revised the application, and all applicants must complete a revised application. You can download the application from Ecology’s OpCert website at: [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wastewater/op\\_cert/index.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wastewater/op_cert/index.html), or you can request an application packet from the OpCert website or call OpCert program staff.

You can complete the application online or print it out and complete it by hand. Then mail the completed application and \$50 application fee to:

Department of Ecology  
 Cashiering Unit  
 PO Box 47611  
 Olympia, WA 98504-7611

**Q: What happens after I apply to take the exam?**

**A:** After the OpCert Program approves your application, we will e-mail or mail an exam notification card to you and send your information to AMP. AMP will send you an e-mail or postcard with further instructions. After AMP notifies you, you can schedule to take your certification exam online anytime at <http://www.goamp.com> (click “candidates”) or by calling AMP’s Candidate Support Center toll-free at 1-800-519-9901.

**Q: What are the new exam dates?**

**A:** There are no designated exam dates. After we approve your application, you decide when you want to take the exam. AMP administers exams year round, Monday through Friday, at either 9 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. AMP administers exams on Saturday once a month at a designated exam location. The location for the Saturday exam changes monthly.

**Q: Where are the testing sites?**

**A:** Testing sites are located at:

- Bellevue
- Spokane
- Tacoma
- Yakima
- Portland, OR
- Other AMP locations, nationwide

If you give AMP your e-mail address, they will include driving instructions and parking information in your confirmation e-mail. You can also get directions and parking information from AMP's website at <http://www.goamp.com>.

**Q: What happens if I can't make my scheduled exam time?**

**A:** You may reschedule your exam one time without penalty. You need to contact AMP directly at least two business days **before** your scheduled exam date. Please note: OpCert Program staff can't reschedule your exam for you - you must contact AMP directly.

**Q: What happens if I'm late for my 9 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. exam time?**

**A:** AMP will not allow you to take the exam if you are more than 15 minutes late. Plan your time accordingly and allow for traffic and unforeseen delays. If you are late, the exam and testing service fees are forfeited. You'll have to reschedule the exam and pay the fees again.

**Q: Can the exam sites accommodate applicants with disabilities?**

**A:** Yes. The sites comply with all federal, state, and local laws regarding use of public buildings, meet ADA accessibility requirements, and accommodate applicants with disabilities. If you need to request special accommodations contact AMP at 1-800-345-6559 to schedule your examination. Please allow AMP 30 days to make arrangements.

If you have ADA paperwork on file with the OpCert Program, you can contact them and ask them to forward a copy to AMP.

**Q: What should I bring to the exam site?**

**A:** You need to bring:

- Two forms of identification. One must be government issued with a photo and signature.
- A non-programmable calculator.
- If you wear special glasses when you work at a computer, be sure to bring them.

**Q: What will AMP provide?**

**A:** AMP provides the ABC formula/conversion sheet, pencils, and scratch paper. You may not bring any writing instruments or personal belongings into the testing site.

**Q: How long will I have to complete the exam?**

**A:** You will have from three to four hours to complete your exam. The time allowed depends on the exam and the number of questions. AMP will give you this information when you schedule your exam.

Operator in Training	3 hours
Group I	3 hours
Group II	3 hours
Group III	4 hours
Group IV	4 hours

**Q: When will I get my exam results?**

**A:** You will receive your exam score and diagnostic profile before you leave the testing center, after you complete the exam.

**Q: How will the OpCert Program get my exam results?**

**A:** AMP will e-mail your results to the OpCert Program.

**Q: After I pass the exam, what do I have to do to get my certificate and validation card?**

**A:** Nothing. We will process your certificate and validation card when we receive your exam results from AMP. We will make every effort to get them to you as quickly as possible; however, we request about six weeks to process them. Your certificate issue date will be the day you passed your exam.

**Q: If I don't pass the computer-based exam, how do I schedule a retake?**

**A:** You will need to contact AMP to reschedule the exam. There are instructions on the score report you receive after you take the exam. AMP will collect the \$26 ABC exam fee and \$59 or \$76 AMP testing service fee when you schedule your exam retake. AMP requires you to wait 14 days before you retake the exam.

**Q: Do I have to submit an application and fee to the OpCert program to retake the exam?**

**A:** The OpCert program will use your application for one year. After that you will have to submit a new application and fee to retake the exam.

**Q: I'm not familiar with computer-based testing. Will someone be there to help me?**

**A:** Yes. An exam proctor will be available to answer your questions about testing procedures. Before you start the exam, the exam proctor will go over the rules and you will both enter your passwords into the computer. Then, you may complete a short exercise to become familiar with the computer, the layout of the questions, and features of the computer-based exam. During an AMP field test, operators with limited computer skills had no problem completing the exam.

**Q: Does this change affect my ability to get reciprocity in other states?**

**A:** No. The computer-based exam is the same as the written exam. With any reciprocity, you still must meet all the requirements of the state where you are applying for certification.

**Q: Can operators in other states apply to take Washington's computer-based exam?**

**A:** Yes. AMP is a national testing service with locations in every state. Out-of-state operators can apply to take Washington's certification exam. If we approve their application, they can schedule the exam at an AMP testing site in their state.

**Q: Where can I get additional information?**

**A:** For information about the Wastewater Operator Certification Program visit our website at: [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wastewater/op\\_cert/index.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wastewater/op_cert/index.html)

For information about AMP and its testing service, visit the website at: [http://www.abccert.org/pdf\\_docs/abcampinfo.pdf](http://www.abccert.org/pdf_docs/abcampinfo.pdf)