



# A GUIDE TO WASHINGTON'S WELL OPERATOR LICENSE PROGRAM

For Well Operators

Water Resources Program

## For more information:

Online visit:  
[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wrhome.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wrhome.html) – click on wells  
All publications referred to are available online.

To leave a recorded message or request publications, call 1-800-468-0261

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## Introduction

There are two categories of wells drilled in Washington State (water well and resource protection well). This guide will provide the applicant with step by step procedures used to qualify for, obtain and renew a water well and/or resource protection well operator's license. Under the water well and resource protection well categories, you may qualify for either a trainee license or a full license.

Since 1998 we require continuing education as part of the qualifying experience needed to apply for a well operator's license. For more information on Continuing Education, request or view online Publication #WR-98-153 "Continuing Education for Well Operators".

## Training program

### Entering the Trainee Program

#### Phase One

1. Complete 600 hours of field experience in water or resource protection well drilling. This experience must be gained under the direct supervision of a Washington State licensed well operator. The direct supervisor must have been licensed for at least three years. Direct supervision means that while this field experience is gained, the supervisor must be on-site at all times to supervise the unlicensed employee.
2. Obtain 6 units of continuing education (CEUs). Although there is no time limit to obtain your experience and CEUs, these requirements must be met before taking the written exam. When you are ready, simply notify Ecology and fill out an application to take the appropriate tests to obtain your training license.

#### Phase Two

1. Request a study packet by visiting our web site (see sidebar) or calling 1-800-468-0261 (follow the prompts). Submit an Application for Water Well or Resource Protection Well Operator Trainee License. This application must be filled out completely, including the "Statement of Work Experience" and "Statement of Sponsor" box.
2. Provide documentation of your 6 Continuing Education Units.
3. Submit a \$75 fee.

November 2007 - Revised

98-1809-WR



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## Phase Three

1. You must pass a written examination. The written examination must be scheduled and may be taken in Olympia, Yakima or Spokane.
2. You must pass an on-site field examination. The on-site examination will be scheduled AFTER you pass the written examination. For more information on the on-site examination, request or view online Publication #98-1808-WR “On-Site Testing for Licensed Well Operators.” After successfully completing this phase, you will be issued a trainee license.

## Trainee License

Your trainee license will be valid for two years. During that time, you MUST keep a daily log that is signed off by your supervising, licensed driller. You will need to show 3600 hours of field experience in your daily log and proof of an additional 14 CEUs. During this time you are allowed to work with indirect supervision by a licensed driller. Indirect supervision means that your supervisor must have been licensed for a minimum of three years; your supervisor must be available by radio, cell phone or some other means of communication; and your supervisor can reach the drill site within one hour.

A trainee license is not renewable. However, a one time extension may be granted for up to 24 months. You must provide a reason for the extension. There is a \$75 fee for an extension.

## Completing the Trainee Program

After you have obtained 3600 hours of documented experience (daily log) and 14 CEUs, you may apply to be fully licensed. Submit your completed application, \$75 filing fee, daily log, and proof of your 14 CEUs. No other examination will be given.

## Full Washington Well Operator License

To qualify for a full license in water wells or resource protection wells, you must have a minimum amount of field experience and continuing education units. You can qualify for a full license by meeting one of the following requirements:

- ③ Becoming a Licensed Trainee and completing the Trainee Program above; or
- ③ Working as a driller licensed in another state; or
- ③ Working in Washington State as an unlicensed helper and supervised by a licensed operator; or
- ③ Applying for and passing a written exam when your Washington State license has expired.

## Trainee License

See “Training Program” section above.

## Licensed Out of State

If you held a license in another state for at least 3 years and have obtained 32 CEUs, you may apply for a Washington State Well Operator License. Although there is no time limit to obtain your experience and CEUs, these requirements must be met before taking the written exam. When you are ready, simply notify Ecology.

### Phase One

Request a study packet by visiting our web site (see sidebar on front page) or calling 1-800-468-0261 (follow the prompts). Submit a completed application for a Well Operator's License, a \$75 fee, and provide proof of your 32 CEUs.

### Phase Two

You must pass a written examination and may be required to pass an on-site examination. The written examination must be scheduled, and may be taken in Olympia, Yakima or Spokane.

If an on-site examination is required, you will be notified after passing the written examination. For more information on this test, request or view online, Publication # 98-1808-WR "On-Site Testing for Licensed Well Operators."

## New Applicant (never been licensed)

You must complete 5400 hours of drilling experience under the direct supervision of a licensed driller. Your licensed supervisor must be on site at all times during well construction. You will need to obtain 32 CEUs. There is no time limit for completing this step. When you are ready, simply notify Ecology.

### Phase One

Request a study packet by visiting our website (see sidebar on front page) or calling 1-800-468-0261 (follow the prompts). Submit a completed application for a Well Operator's License, a \$75 fee and provide proof of your 32 CEUs.

### Phase Two

You must pass a written examination. The written examination must be scheduled and may be taken in Olympia, Yakima or Spokane.

## Expired Licensed Driller

If your license has lapsed, you may apply for a new license under this category. You must gain 7 CEUs for every year, or portion of a year your license has expired.

### Phase One

Request a study packet by visiting our website (see sidebar on front page) or calling 1-800-468-0261 (follow the prompts). Submit a completed application for a Well Operator's License, a \$75 fee, and proof of the necessary CEUs.

#### Phase Two

You must pass a written examination. The written examination must be scheduled and may be taken in Olympia, Yakima or Spokane.

## Qualifying for Both a Water and Resource Protection Well Operator's License

Qualifying experience must be in either water well or resource protection well drilling. For example, if you are applying for a water well license, all experience must be gained in water well drilling. However, if you already hold a water well or resource protection well license, you may qualify to receive the other license if you obtain an additional 600 hours of well drilling experience.

#### Phase One

Request a study packet by visiting our website (see sidebar on front page) or calling 1-800-468-0261 (follow the prompts). Submit a completed application for a Well Operator's License, a \$75 fee, and proof of your additional 600 hours of experience. Proof of experience will consist of drilling reports showing you were the driller of record on at least 15 wells, or other documentation approved by the department.

#### Phase Two

You must pass a written examination. The written examination may be taken in Olympia, Yakima or Spokane.

## License Renewal

Full licenses are issued for two years and must be renewed before they lapse. During those two years, you must obtain 14 CEUs. To renew your license, the department must receive a completed renewal application, appropriate fee (\$75 for one license, \$150 for both) and proof of your continuing education.

If you do not renew your license by the renewal date, you may not construct or decommission wells. You must apply for a new license. You may apply under "Expired Licensed Driller" category described above.

*If you need this publication in an alternate format, please call the Water Resources Program at (360) 407-6600.*

*Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.*