

*This guidance document is advisory in nature but is binding on an agency until amended by such agency. A guidance document does not include internal procedural documents that only affect the internal operations of the agency and does not impose additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties or include confidential information or rules and regulations made in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act. If you believe that this guidance document imposes additional requirements or penalties on regulated parties, you may request a review of the document.*

## **Guide to Submittal of Continuing Education Programs For Professional Wastewater Operator Certification**

[Title 197 – Rules and Regulations for the Certification of Wastewater Treatment Operators in Nebraska](#) requires continuing education for certified operators as a prerequisite for certificate renewal. Prior approval by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) of training or educational programs is required if it is to be used as continuing education for purposes of fulfilling the education requirements of a certified operator, except for institutional education programs as identified in Chapter 7 of Title 197. The Department will evaluate and determine the number of professional development hours that a certified professional can claim for successful, documented completion of any course or program.

The following is intended to help you submit complete information on training or educational programs you wish to have reviewed for consideration for Department approved professional development hours for wastewater operator professionals..

- **Submittal Method:** Program information may be submitted by email, fax, or regular mail. Electronic submittals should be Microsoft compatible (i.e., Word or Excel).
- **Submittal Deadline:** Submittal Deadline: An [Application for Approval of Continuing Education for Certified Wastewater Treatment Facility Operators](#) for any proposed program or course should be submitted to the Department for approval not less than sixty (60) days prior to the date offered. A continuing education provider should not advertise or otherwise represent any program or course as approved for meeting the continuing education requirements of Title 197 until such program or course has been approved by the NDEE.
- **Contact Information:** Provide complete contact information with each submittal. Include the name of the contact person or persons responsible for the program, mail and email addresses, and telephone numbers (and fax numbers, if appropriate).
- **General Program Information:** Include planned program times, dates and locations. When a program is approved, this information is included on the [list of approved programs](#) on the NDEE webpage.

- Speaker Qualifications: Include adequate speaker biographical information to demonstrate that the instruction or presentations will be conducted by individuals qualified in the program or course topic. It is your responsibility to demonstrate to the Department's satisfaction that individuals qualified in the program or course topic will conduct the instruction or presentations. The following should be provided for each presenter:
  - Full name;
  - Contact information;
  - Experience, training, or professional licenses held; and
  - Professional experience.

A speaker's professional experience, publications, projects, or educational activities may be beneficial to help demonstrate the speaker's qualifications in a particular area. Please note, statements like "has nine years experience with wastewater treatment", "has worked on 20 facilities", "has many wastewater publications", "has presented many programs", or similar statements provide little or no useful information to demonstrate or verify qualifications. Provide specific examples of the speaker's qualifications. Consider statements such as "Mr. Smith has been the Direct Responsible Charge Class IV Wastewater Operator at Top City for the past 10 years" or "Ms. Jones, P.E., has been the primary design engineer for Top Engineers Inc. on the Top City wastewater facilities upgrade". The Department may request additional information, as needed.

- Detailed Program: Submit an outline of the program or course with adequate detail to verify the topics of the presentation, including detailed time lines to show the hours of education presentation planned. Please identify expected break times. If there are concurrent sessions in a program, the program provider will need to identify how attendance will be verified for each program segment. A short one sentence description for a one-hour or longer presentation will likely not be sufficient. Programs should be to the nearest quarter of an hour.
- Restricted Hours: The Department may request additional information as needed to make a decision on an educational program. Please note that there are additional restrictions on continuing education hours for industrial operators. Consequently, we request that any program with continuing education specific to non-compatible or industrial wastewater operations clearly identify those portions of the program. If approved, you also should highlight this information when it is provided to the operators.
- Documentation of Attendance: Please indicate how attendance will be documented. You will need to provide the Department with a list of attendees, their certification number and the number of contact hours successfully completed within 30 days of completion of the program.
- No Automatic Scheduling: If you wish to add additional program dates for the same program, simply submit an application identifying the specific previously approved program and the new dates. You must, however, resubmit the application each year for any training program that will be repeated in subsequent years, unless otherwise specifically notified in writing by the

Department. Please note that the hours an individual operator can use to meet continuing education requirements will be restricted, or not allowed, for repeat programs in the same renewal cycle.

- Approval: Any program approval will be documented in writing by the Department and will be included on a [list of approved continuing education programs](#) maintained on the Department's webpage.

Please note that trade shows or similar type activities, generally do not have a specific educational program with the presentation timelines, identified speakers, or attendance documentation required to comply with the continuing education criteria. While operators can obtain useful information at trade shows, these types of activities are typically not approvable for wastewater operator continuing education hours. Please also note that a wide variety of topics and programs are submitted and some speakers may not be qualified for all program areas. The Department does not maintain a separate list of speaker's qualifications. It is the program providers' responsibility to provide sufficient biographical information to allow the NDEE to make a determination or verify that a speaker is qualified for the program area or areas identified for each program submitted.