



# 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 request publications:  
(360) 407-7122

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PO Box 47600  
Olympia, WA 98504

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1204 Railroad Ave #200  
Bellingham WA 98225

Bellevue Northwest Region Office  
3190-160th Ave SE  
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Yakima Central Region Office  
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Yakima WA 98902  
(360) 575-2490

Spokane Eastern Region Office  
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Spokane WA 99205  
(509) 329-3400

## Introduction

There are two categories of wells drilled in Washington State, water and resource protection wells. This guide provides applicants instruction on qualifying for, obtaining, and renewing water and resource protection well operator licenses. Under the water and resource protection well categories you may qualify as either a trainee or for a full license.

Since 1998 we require continuing education as part of the qualifying experience needed to apply for a well operator license. For more information on Continuing Education, request or view online Publication #098-153-WR “*Continuing Education for Well Operators.*”

## Training Program

### To Enter the Trainee Program

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. Complete 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.
3. Obtain a study packet, publication #098-1808-WR “On-Site Testing for Licensed Well Operator” by visiting [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) or calling (360) 407-7122.
4. Submit a Water or Resource Protection Well Operator Trainee License application. This application must be filled out completely, including the “Statement of Work Experience” and “Statement of Sponsor” box.
5. Provide documentation of your 6 CEUs.
6. Submit a \$75 fee.

7. Pass the written examination. The written examination must be scheduled and may be taken in Olympia, Bellevue, Yakima, or Spokane.
8. Pass the on-site field examination. The on-site examination will be scheduled after you pass the written examination. After successfully completing the above requirements you will be issued a trainee license.

## Completing the Trainee Program

### Licensed Trainee

A trainee license is valid for two years. During that time you must keep a daily log that is signed on a daily basis by your supervising licensed operator. In addition to the 600 hours required to obtain your trainee license, you will need to show an additional 3,600 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 well operator. The supervisor must have been licensed for a minimum of three years in Washington. The supervising licensed operator must be available by radio, cell phone, or other means of communication, and be able to reach the drill site within one hour.

After you have obtained 3,600 hours of documented experience and 14 CEUs you may apply to be fully licensed by submitting a completed application, \$75 filing fee, daily log, and proof of 14 CEUs. No other examination will be given.

Trainee licenses are not renewable. However, a one-time extension may be granted for up to 24 months. You must provide a reason for the extension and pay a \$75 extension fee.

## Full Washington Well Operator License

To qualify for a full water or resource protection well operator license you must have the minimum amount of field experience and CEUs and meeting one of the following requirements:

- Becoming a Licensed Trainee and completing the Trainee Program.
- Working as a driller licensed in another state.
- Work in Washington State as an unlicensed helper and who is supervised by a licensed operator.
- Applying for licensing and passing a written on-exam if your previous Washington State well operator license has expired.

## Licensed out of State

If you held a license in another state for at least three years and have obtained 32 CEUs, you may apply for a Washington State Well Operator License. There is no time limit to obtain your experience and CEUs. However, the requirements must be met prior to taking the written exam.

- Obtain a study packet, publication #098-1808-WR “*On-Site Testing for Licensed Well Operators*” by visiting [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) or calling (360) 407-7122.
- Submit a completed application, \$75 filing fee, and proof of out-of-state licensing and 32 CEUs.
- Pass the written examination. The written examination must be scheduled and may be taken in Olympia, Yakima, or Spokane.
- An on-site examination is required. You will be notified on how to schedule the on-site examination after passing the written examination.

## New Applicant (never been licensed)

Complete 5,400 hours of drilling experience under the direct supervision of a Washington State licensed operator. Your licensed supervisor must be on site at all times during well construction before you obtain your license. You will need to obtain 32 CEUs. There is no time limit for completing these requirements.

- Obtain a study packet, publication #098-1808-WR “*On-Site Testing for Licensed Well Operators*” by visiting [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) or calling (360) 407-7122.
- Submit a completed application, \$75 filing fee, and proof of 5,400 hours of supervised drilling experience and 32 CEUs.
- Pass the written examination. The written examination must be scheduled and may be taken in Olympia, Yakima, or Spokane.

## Expired License

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.

- Obtain a study packet, publication #098-1808-WR “*On-Site Testing for Licensed Well Operators*” by visiting [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) or calling (360) 407-7122.
- Submit a completed application, \$75 filing fee, daily log, and proof of your 7 preceding license expiration CEUs.
- Pass the 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

If you have either a water or resource protection well license, you may qualify to receive the other license by obtaining an additional 600 hours of well drilling experience.

- Obtain a study packet, publication #098-1808-WR “*On-Site Testing for Licensed Well Operators*” by visiting [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) or calling (360) 407-7122.
- Submit a completed *Well Construction Operator License Application*, \$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 Ecology.
- 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 date of expiration. During those two years, you must obtain 14 CEUs. To renew your license Ecology must receive a completed renewal application, associated license fee (\$75 for one license, \$150 for both), and proof of your CEUs.

You must apply for a new license if you do not renew your license by the renewal date and you may not construct or decommission wells. You may reapply under “Expired Licensed Driller” category described above.