



# Focus on **CONTINUING EDUCATION** **FOR LICENSED WELL OPERATORS**

For Well Operators

Water Resources Program

## For more information:

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**Washington well drillers are required to gain continuing education when applying for a new well operator license or renewing an existing one.**

Well operators need approved Continuing Education Units (CEUs) when applying for or renewing, a well operator's license in Washington State. Taking continuing education classes allows drillers to stay informed of industry changes and technological advances. Combining field experience with classroom work enhances a driller's knowledge, skills, and abilities.

*A CEU is one unit, approved by Ecology, for time spent in classroom, workshop, or seminar training. An applicant or licensed driller must gain a minimum number of CEUs to obtain or renew a well operator's license.*

## **Requesting approval of a training course**

Pre-approval of courses prior to the course date is strongly suggested. Courses must be taken from a “preferred provider”. Anyone may become a preferred provider as long as they meet eligibility requirements. In order to become a preferred provider, you must fill out an application and syllabus form. These forms are available online, or can be requested by calling the 1-800 line (see sidebar). We have a list of preferred providers on our website.

Courses may be taken first and then approved for CEUs, if the instructor is willing to become a preferred provider. This can be a time consuming process. During this period of time: 1) You will not know how many CEUs your class is worth. 2) Although the class may have CEU value, it may not be enough to renew your license.

## **How CEUs are approved**

Ecology assigns units to courses based on a recommendation from the Technical Advisory Group. We maintain a list of future courses, ongoing courses, and courses that have already been given on our website. The number of units given to a course depends on several factors. These include the difficulty of the subject, the qualifications of the instructor, and how closely the course outline relates to the drilling profession.

Applicants and licensed well drillers should know how many CEUs are required, and plan to take as many classes as necessary to obtain or renew a well operator license.

*A driller cannot “carry over” credits from one license renewal period to another.*

## **Locating a training course to fit a driller's needs and schedule**

Training courses should relate to occupational health and safety; business and office skills; interpersonal skills; technical aspects of the drilling industry; or other subjects as approved by us. A driller can look for training from members of professional associations, government agencies, private businesses, or individuals. Correspondence courses may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

Ecology can provide a list of training courses that have already received CEU approval. However, a driller is not limited to taking the courses that are on this list, as long as the instructor is willing to become a preferred provider. Look for training opportunities in trade magazines, training flyers or brochures, advertisements in newspapers or mail, and courses offered at universities.

## **Requesting approval of a training course**

Pre-approval of courses prior to the course date is recommended. This will ensure an accurate count of units assigned. A driller can take the course first and then ask for CEU approval, but there is no guarantee that the course will be approved or how many CEUs will be assigned.

There is a form for drillers to use when asking Ecology to evaluate a course they wish to attend. A driller is asked to provide information on the course content, instructors, and course length.

An instructor may also ask for Ecology's approval prior to the course. It would be useful to publicize that information when advertising the course. There is also a form for a provider to use when making this request. Forms can be requested by calling the 1-800 number listed on page 1.

## **Maintaining your training records**

It is the responsibility of the licensed operator to keep track of continuing education classes taken. Proof of attendance may include copies of first aid/cpr cards, OSHA hazmat cards, certificates, or agendas with sign off by instructors. Licensed drillers must provide these proof documents at the time of application for a license or renewal of a license.

*Ecology has also developed a tracking database for continuing education for licensed drillers only. CEUs may be added as classes are taken by submitting approved forms of proof of attendance. If proof of continuing education is sent at the time classes are taken and Ecology has this proof on file, no further documentation will be needed when a license is renewed.*

## **Summary of important points**

1. Confirm the number of CEUs needed, and look for courses that enhance drilling knowledge and professional skills.
2. Obtain prior approval of course work whenever possible.
3. Maintain records of approved training courses. Drillers will need to show documentation of course work when applying for a drilling license, or applying for renewal of a drilling license. Examples of documentation include certificates of completion, transcripts, attendance rosters, and diplomas.

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*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.*