

Appendix A - WWTF Survey details

Salary adjustments accompanying changes in operator certification could have an economic impact on WWTF. To accurately assess how operator certification affects salary structures, we surveyed 123 WWTFs of geographical locations and sizes throughout the state (text below). We received fifty responses.

Survey responses:

Out of the fifty respondents, twenty-three had salary structures dependent on certification. The remainder had salary structures based on experience and other factors.

For the WWTFs where certification affected operator salaries, operators were compensated for certification in one of four ways:

1. An increase in salary following the passing of the advanced exam
2. An increase in salary following the passing of the advanced exam and some predetermined number of subclass exams
3. An increase in salary for each subclass certification
4. An increase in salary when advance certification is achieved in all advanced subclasses.

Salary increases ranged from \$0.10 – \$1.50 per hour, or \$208 – \$3,120 per year, per operator. While we cannot predict exactly how many operators will be grandfathered into a higher salary, we do not anticipate this salary hike to be excessively expensive for plants that incorporate certification in their salary packages. Operators will also benefit from the higher wages.

Text of survey:

Hello,

The WDNR is revising the certification requirements for wastewater treatment plant operators found in NR 114. I am working with Jack Saltes on an economic impact analysis of the proposed changes. To make sure we're accurately assessing the salary impact on WWTF, we're soliciting feedback from affected parties. If you could please answer six brief questions, we would appreciate it - it will make sure we're accurately assessing how the revised rule will impact your facilities. Please send your response by Friday, December 21, 2012, and thank you for your time.

Compensation Survey:

1. Is your treatment plant Class 1 or 2 (Intro) or Class 3 or 4 (Advanced)?
2. How many Wastewater Treatment Plant operators does your treatment plant have?

3. How many operators have intro certification?
How many have advanced certification?
4. Is treatment plant operator certification required of operators other than the Operator-In-Charge?

At your WWTP, please describe the relationship between operator certification level and salary level:

5. Is salary based on each individual Intro subclass certification? If yes, monetarily, how much is each subclass certification worth to the operator?
6. Does salary increase with advanced certification? If yes, monetarily, how much is each advanced subclass certification worth to the operator?

Again, thanks very much for taking the time to help us estimate these figures. In case you're curious, here's a brief summary of the primary changes being implemented:

- Six new subclasses will be created
- Classification for operators and facilities will change from Grades 1-4 to "Basic" and "Advanced" levels.
- A new point system will be used for Advanced Certification.

Appendix B – Tables and Figures

Please note: Tables and figures are placed in an appendix rather than the body of the report because formatting on DOA – 2049 (Fiscal Estimate and Economic Impact Analysis) does not allow for any tables or figures.

Table 1 – Statewide impact of NR 144 rule revision

	Monetary value	Number affected	Impact
Exam fee difference	+/- \$25 per advanced exam	All operators seeking advanced certification	Cost increases for those taking the exam, cost decreases for those not taking the exam.
Grandfathering of operators	\$0.10 – \$1.50/hour (\$208 - \$3,120/year per facility)	~ 350 (half of WWTF statewide)	Salary increase for operators grandfathered into advanced certification.
Facility reclassification	\$150 per facility	~140 facilities (see Table 4)	Plant/operator must pursue advanced certification. (Currently, ½ of facilities contacted don't require operators* to be certified.)
Certification of sanitary systems	\$25/facility (\$17,500 statewide)	700 facilities statewide	Operator must obtain certification.
Educational providers	See Table 3	Undetermined – (See Table 3)	Education providers could see an increase in students.

*Other than the Operator-in-Charge, who must be certified.

Table 2 – Differences in cost between former and new advanced exam

	No. Exams	Exam cost	Application fee	Total
Old System	Average of 5	\$25	NA	\$125
New System	1	\$50	\$100	\$150
Difference				+/--\$25*

Note: Old advanced exams comprised 40 questions each. The new advanced exam has 100 questions.

*While there may be an increase in price for those choosing to take the exam, there will be a decrease for those who no longer need to take the exam.

Table 3 – Summary of various costs associated with point systems

Classes	Points*	Hours	Cost
Distance Learning or Correspondence Class UC- Sacramento, Tetra Tech, etc.	2	80	\$99 - \$3310
College Semester Wastewater Course	1.5	60	\$467 - \$1296
	1	40	\$350 - \$1042
Certificate Program Class Classroom or online	1	40	NA [∅]
1-3 Subject Wastewater Class Classroom or online	0.5	20	\$99 - \$1295

* 10 points needed for advanced certification.

[∅] This certification program does not currently exist. Thus there is no cost associated with it.

Note: These educational costs are not required under the new system. Advanced certification may be obtained with experience and the advanced exam.

Table 4 – Range of reclassification costs

Percentage of plants reclassified as advanced	Statewide Impact
10%	\$7,680
20%	\$15,360
30%	\$23,040
40%	\$30,720
50%	\$38,400

Note: The application and exam fee is \$150; reclassification will cost \$150 per facility. There are currently 512 plants classified as Basic in Wisconsin. We currently estimate that approximately 30% of plants will be reclassified as Advanced.

Figure 1. Current WWTF Classification of facilities


