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Part III

Environmental Protection Agency

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Final Guidelines for the Certification and Recertification of the  
Operators of Community and Nontransient Noncommunity Public Water  
Systems; Notice

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-6230-8]

Final guidelines for the Certification and Recertification of the  
Operators of Community and Nontransient Noncommunity Public Water  
Systems

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Final guidelines.

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SUMMARY: In this document, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is finalizing the ``Guidelines for the Certification and Recertification of the Operators of Community and Nontransient Noncommunity Public Water Systems.'' The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Amendments of 1996 require that these final guidelines be published in the Federal Register by February 6, 1999. These guidelines provide States with the minimum standards for the development, implementation and enforcement of operator certification programs for community and nontransient noncommunity public water systems. Beginning two years after publication, EPA must withhold 20% of a State's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund capitalization grant funds unless the State has adopted and is implementing an operator certification program that meets the requirements of these guidelines or submits its existing program that is substantially equivalent to these guidelines. The final guidelines are published in Appendix A of this document.

DATES: Effective Date: February 5, 1999. Compliance Date: Beginning February 5, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Public comments and the comment response document on the draft guidelines are available for review at Water Docket (docket #W-98-07), Environmental Protection Agency, Room EB57, 401 M Street, S.W., Washington DC 20460. For access to the Docket materials, call 202-260-3027 between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time for an appointment and reference Docket #W-98-07.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Safe Drinking Water Hotline, toll free (800) 426-4791, can be contacted for general information about and copies of this document. For technical inquiries, contact Jenny Jacobs, Implementation and Assistance Division, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (4606), U.S. EPA, 401 M Street, S.W., Washington, DC, 20460. The telephone number is (202) 260-2939 and the e-mail address is jacobson.jenny@epamail.epa.gov. For Regional contacts, see Supplementary Information.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Regional Contacts

- I. Katie Leo, US EPA Region I, One Congress Street, Suite 1100 (CMU), Boston, MA 02114, (617) 918-1623
- II. Gerard McKenna, US EPA Region II, Drinking Water Section, Water Programs Branch, 290 Broadway, New York, NY 10007-1866, (212) 637-3838
- III. Barbara Smith, US EPA Region III, Drinking Water Branch (3WP22), 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103-2020, (215) 814-5786
- IV. Janine Morris, US EPA Region IV, Atlanta Federal Center, 61 Forsyth Street, Atlanta, GA 30303-8960, (404) 562-9480
- V. Charles Pycha, US EPA Region V, Water Division, 77 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, IL 60604-3507, (312) 886-0259
- VI. Tye Biasco, US EPA Region VI, Drinking Water Section (6WQ-SD), 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, TX 75202-2733, (214) 665-2140
- VII. Robert Dunlevy, US EPA Region VII, Water, Wetlands and Pesticides Division, 726 Minnesota Avenue, Kansas City, KS 66101, (913) 551-7798
- VIII. Anthony Q. DeLoach, US EPA Region VIII, Municipal Systems Unit, Drinking Water/Wastewater (8P-W-MS), 999 18th Street, Suite 500, Denver, CO 80202-2466, (303) 312-6070
- IX. Kevin Ryan, US EPA Region IX, Drinking Water Office (WTR-6), 75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105, (415) 744-2052
- X. Bill Chamberlain, US EPA Region X, Office of Water, Drinking Water Unit (OW-136), 1200 6th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101, (206) 553-8515

##### Background

###### 1. Statutory Requirements

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Amendments of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-182) direct the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in cooperation with the States, to publish guidelines in the Federal Register specifying minimum standards for certification and recertification of operators of community and nontransient noncommunity public water systems. The final guidelines are required to be published by February 6, 1999. States then have two years after publication to adopt and be implementing an operator certification program that meets the requirements of these guidelines. After that date, unless a State has adopted and is implementing an approved program, the Administrator must withhold 20 percent of the

funds a State is otherwise entitled to receive in its Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) capitalization grants under section 1452 of SDWA.

All of the requirements contained in these guidelines are to avoid DWSRF capitalization grant withholding. There are no other sanctions for States with operator certification programs that do not meet the requirements of these guidelines.

## 2. Guideline Development Process

These guidelines are the result of a thorough stakeholder consultation process under which EPA utilized the combined knowledge and expertise of two work groups that it appointed on operator certification. One work group, the State-EPA Work Group, was appointed to fulfill EPA's responsibility under section 1419(a) to publish guidelines on operator certification ``in cooperation with States.'' This work group was composed of seven State and ten EPA representatives. The other work group, the Operator Certification Work Group of the National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC), also referred to as the Partnership, was formed to provide EPA with views in addition to those of States. This group was composed of 23 members representing public water systems, environmental and public interest advocacy groups, State drinking water program representatives, EPA, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Public Health Service, Indian Health Service, and other interest groups.

Procedurally, the two groups worked closely together. The Partnership identified potential categories for which minimum standards would be developed. The State-EPA Work Group then developed draft issue papers for these categories. The Partnership and the State-EPA Work Group exchanged reviews of the proposed language on what both groups referred to as ``baseline standards,'' and worked toward achieving consensus on these standards. The baseline standards were then forwarded by the Partnership to the NDWAC. In October 1997, the NDWAC formally transmitted its recommended baseline standards to the EPA. The EPA incorporated the recommendations of the NDWAC into the ``Draft Guidelines for the Certification and Recertification of the Operators of Community and Nontransient Noncommunity Public Water Systems.'' The draft guidelines were published for public comment in the Federal Register on March 27, 1998.

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The comment period extended for 90 days during which over 90 parties submitted public comments. During the 90-day public comment period, EPA held public stakeholder meetings in San Francisco, CA, Dallas, TX, and Washington, DC, to brief interested parties on the draft guidelines and to accept public comments. The complete response to comments document is available for review at Water Docket (docket #W-98-07), Environmental Protection Agency, Room EB57, 401 M Street, S.W., Washington DC 20460. For access to the Docket materials, call 202-260-3027 between 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time for an appointment and reference Docket #W-98-07.

In August 1998, both workgroups met to consider the public comments and to make recommendations for finalizing the guidelines based on the public comments. The resulting recommendations were forwarded to the NDWAC for consideration. In November 1998, the NDWAC formally transmitted its recommendations to EPA. The EPA made changes based on

the public comments and on the recommendations of its work groups and the NDWAC. These guidelines set the minimum baseline standards for an operator certification program to meet the provisions of the 1996 Amendments to the SDWA. These guidelines were developed to enable states to have flexibility in the implementation and enforcement of program details necessary to administer a successful operator certification program while ensuring the protection of public health.

## Response to Comments on Key Certification Issues

### 1. Public Health Objectives

EPA received a large number of comments in support of the public health objectives as stated in the draft guidelines.

EPA intends to use the public health objectives in its review and evaluation of State operator certification programs and in its determination as to whether the State programs meet the requirements of the guidelines.

### 2. Operator Testing/Exams

EPA received a number of comments on the type of operator certification exam (e.g., written, oral, performance-based) that should be required by the guidelines. Some commenters felt that written exams should be required to ensure that an operator could read and write. Some commenters felt that other types of exams (e.g., oral, performance-based) may be more appropriate, and therefore, the type of exam should be left up to the State.

EPA believes that the type of test that best measures the knowledge, skills, ability, and judgement of an operator for a particular classification level should be left up to the State that is responsible for the design and administration of the test.

EPA received several comments on the requirement that exams be State-validated. Some commenters asked for clarification.

In the final guidelines, EPA eliminated the word ``State'' from the above phrase. For clarification, EPA included a definition of ``validated exam'' in the final guidelines.

### 3. Operator Training

Some comments were received supporting the inclusion of specific training requirements in the guidelines while some commenters supported the draft guidelines which allow States to decide what type and amount of training are appropriate for each level of classification.

EPA believes that the type of operator training necessary for each classification level in each State is best determined by the State. The final guidelines do not include specific training requirements; however, EPA will evaluate State training programs as part of its initial and annual review and approval of State operator certification programs.

### 4. Classification of Operators

A number of comments were received requesting clarification as to which water system personnel must be certified under the guidelines.

The final guidelines require that ``all operating personnel making process control/system integrity decisions about water quality or

quantity that affect public health be certified.'' EPA believes that this guideline requirement provides a framework within which States can decide which system personnel must be certified.

## 5. Grandparenting of Operators

Grandparenting of operators was one of the most heavily commented upon issues. The majority of commenters supported grandparenting in some fashion while several commenters opposed the inclusion of grandparenting in the guidelines. Also, some commenters requested clarification as to whether grandparented operators at renewal had to meet the initial certification requirements or the renewal requirements.

EPA believes that grandparenting may be necessary to allow the many competent operators who have been successfully operating water systems but who can not meet the initial certification requirements to continue to work. Accordingly, grandparenting has been included as an option for States. For States that choose to allow grandparenting, the guidelines specify the following restrictions:

- <bullet> Grandparenting is permitted only to existing operator(s) in responsible charge of existing systems which, because of State law changes to meet these guidelines, must for the first time have a certified operator.

- <bullet> The system owner must apply for grandparenting for the operator(s) in responsible charge within two years of the effective date of the State's regulation.

- <bullet> The certification for the grandparented operator must be site specific and non-transferable to other operators.

- <bullet> After an operator is grandparented, he or she must, within some time period specified by the State, meet all requirements to obtain certification renewal, including the payment of any necessary fees, acquiring necessary training to meet the renewal requirements, and demonstrating the skills, knowledge, ability and judgement for that classification.

- <bullet> If the classification of the plant or distribution system changes to a higher level, then the grandparented certification will no longer be valid.

- <bullet> If a grandparented operator chooses to work for a different water system, he or she must meet the initial certification requirements for that system.

Also, EPA added language that requires States to pay special attention to identify specific certification renewal requirements for grandparented operators to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, ability and judgement to operate the system for which they were grandparented.

A couple of commenters asked that the guidelines be changed to make it the operator's responsibility to apply for grandparenting and not the system's responsibility.

In States which choose to allow a grandparenting provision, application for grandparenting is the responsibility of the system owner because grandparenting is site-specific and non-transferable. Only existing systems which must for the first time have a certified operator because of State law changes to meet these guidelines can apply for grandparenting for existing operators in responsible charge.

## 6. Renewal Period

EPA received a large number of comments supporting the establishment

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of a specific renewal period in the guidelines. Comments were mixed, however, as to the maximum length of time that should be required for renewal.

EPA, in reviewing existing State programs, found that most States already require a certification renewal cycle of three years or less. EPA believes that three years is the maximum amount of time that the guidelines should permit an operator to go before having to take more training as part of the renewal requirements in order to remain current in the field.

#### 7. Categories of Systems

EPA received numerous comments on categorizing/classifying systems. Many of the commenters made recommendations as to the specific criteria that they felt should be used to classify systems. Several commenters suggested that EPA develop a national classification system for water systems while a similar number of commenters suggested EPA allow States to develop their own classification system.

Because all of the States currently have a method for categorizing the water systems within the State, EPA believes that establishing a nationally uniform classification system would be very disruptive with little benefit. The guidelines give the States the responsibility to define the categories of systems. The language in the final guidelines was revised to clarify that the criteria in the guidelines are examples for States to use in classifying systems [i.e., (a) complexity, size, source water for treatment systems, and, (b) complexity, size, for distribution systems].

#### 8. Antibacksliding

EPA received mixed comments on the antibacksliding provision. Several commenters supported antibacksliding while several commenters opposed the provision. For example, one commenter questioned EPA's authority to prevent a State from lessening its existing standards to meet the minimum EPA standards. This commenter felt that EPA has no authority to require a State to do anything else except meet the minimum standard. Also, a couple of commenters felt that the antibacksliding provision enables States to keep their programs intact without undue pressure to lessen standards based on the minimum standards set forth in the guidelines which may not be as stringent.

EPA believes that Congress did not intend for States to weaken their existing operator certification programs if those programs go beyond the minimum federal standards. An antibacksliding provision is, therefore, essential to help these States maintain the kind of operator certification programs that they believe best ensure public health protection. EPA does recognize that there may be situations where it is desirable to lessen a specific standard while making overall improvements to a program and has included a provision to allow States to do this if they can justify the change and get approval from EPA. Finally, EPA believes this provision is authorized by Section 1419(a) of the SDWA which states that EPA must take existing programs into account in developing these guidelines.

## 9. Exemptions and Certified Operator Availability

EPA received a number of comments both for and against exemptions from the requirement of a certified operator for small water systems. On a related issue, EPA received many comments on the requirement that a designated certified operator be available for each operating shift. A number of commenters expressed the concern that this requirement would be cost prohibitive for small systems and that small systems should be exempt from the requirement to have a certified operator. Some commenters requested clarification as to the meaning of ``available''.

EPA believes that one of the most important benefits of these guidelines will be better training for operators of small systems and consequently, better public health protection for the consumers served by these systems. Historically, compliance problems are much more widespread in smaller systems and it is these systems that may benefit most by training. Congress also recognized this when it established the operator certification provisions. As discussed in the legislative history of these provisions (S. Rep. 104-169, 104th Cong., 1st Sess at 61), Congress was aware that most States already had operator certification programs and that many exempted small systems. Congress was particularly concerned that the lack of operator training and certification for small systems could create compliance problems. In addition, monitoring and sampling done by a trained operator are more likely to produce accurate results and be correctly interpreted. These concerns were central to the enactment of the operator certification provisions. At the same time, Congress also established a provision for reimbursing small system operators for training and certification costs. Considering this, the guidelines do not allow exemptions. EPA does recognize, however, that some small systems provide little or no treatment and that some nontransient noncommunity systems (e.g., schools) may not have distribution systems and that operators of these systems do not need the same type and amount of training that operators of larger systems may need. The guidelines, therefore, provide States with discretion to tailor training requirements consistent with the level of complexity of systems.

The guidelines do not require these systems to have a certified operator on-site full time. States can implement a program that would allow for a circuit rider to be the certified operator for a number of small systems. This flexibility is provided for in the definition of ``available'' that is included in the guidelines. EPA believes that this language will reduce the financial burden on small systems, and allow for the sharing of certified operators in areas with a scarcity of qualified personnel. States have been provided with flexibility in defining ``available'' since its meaning may differ due to the geographic and demographic differences among States.

Some commenters felt that clarification is needed concerning whether or not people who program or maintain telemetry/SCADA systems are required to be certified.

EPA believes that people who program or maintain telemetry/SCADA systems are not operators of water systems and are not required to be certified. However, if anyone who programs or maintains these types of systems is also making process control/system integrity decisions, that person would be required to be certified.

## 10. Flexible vs. Prescriptive Guidelines

Many of the comments that EPA received supported flexibility for States in implementing the guidelines while many of the comments asked that the guideline requirements be prescribed in greater detail.

EPA believes that these guidelines reflect its efforts to balance the intent for State flexibility with the need for national program accountability.

#### Submittal Schedule and Withholding Process

EPA is developing a revised submittal schedule and withholding process for State programs and will solicit public comments on the revised approach in the Federal Register within the next few months.

#### Source Water Protection

A fully trained operator, as the on-site professional, should understand the benefits of multiple barriers to prevent

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contamination of the sources of public drinking water supplies and should be able to provide important insights into the risks to public water supplies from different, potential sources of contamination. EPA encourages States to include an understanding of drinking water source protection in the training for operators.

#### Paperwork Reduction Act

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), EPA must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to collect the information from the States required under these guidelines. EPA plans to prepare and obtain approval of an Information Collection Request (ICR) for this information. Advance notice of the ICR will be published in the Federal Register for public comment before it is submitted to OMB. EPA may not conduct, or sponsor, and a person is not required to submit to a collection of information unless the Agency has OMB approval for collection of the information.

Dated: January 29, 1999.  
J. Charles Fox,  
Assistant Administrator, Office of Water.

#### Appendix A: Final Guidelines for the Certification and Recertification of the Operators of Community and Nontransient Noncommunity Public Water Systems

##### I. Introduction

##### II. Operator Certification Guidelines

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- B. Antibacksliding
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  1. Authorization
  2. Classification of Systems, Facilities, and Operators
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6. Resources Needed to Implement the Program
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## I. Introduction

These guidelines were developed to meet Section 1419(a) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Amendments of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-182). This section directs the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop guidelines specifying minimum standards for certification and recertification of operators of community and nontransient noncommunity public water systems and to publish final guidelines by February 6, 1999. States have two years after publication to adopt and be implementing an operator certification program that meets the requirements of these guidelines. After that date, unless a State has adopted and is implementing an approved program, the Administrator must withhold 20 percent of the funds a State is otherwise entitled to receive in its Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) capitalization grants under section 1452 of SDWA.

## II. Operator Certification Guidelines

### A. Public Health Objectives

The public health objectives of the guidelines are to ensure that:

- <bullet> Customers of any public water system be provided with an adequate supply of safe, potable drinking water.
- <bullet> Consumers are confident that their water is safe to drink.
- <bullet> Public water system operators are trained and certified and that they have knowledge and understanding of the public health reasons for drinking water standards.

Ongoing training is necessary to the public health objectives of this program.

### B. Antibacksliding

Because these guidelines represent only minimum standards, it is expected that States whose current operator certification program requirements go beyond or exceed these minimum standards not lower their operator certification program requirements. EPA will not approve the operator certification program of any State that reduces its standards below the level that existed 12 months prior to the effective date of these guidelines unless the reduction can be justified by the State and is approved by EPA.

### C. Baseline Standards

Each State operator certification program must include as a minimum the essential elements of the nine baseline standards described below. Essential elements to avoid DWSRF withholding are introduced by words such as ``the States must.'' For each essential element, the State must describe how its operator certification program complies with the requirement. Additionally, several of the baseline standards include highly recommended elements that are intended to complement, improve, and expand the parameters of essential elements of an operator certification program. These highly recommended elements are introduced by words such as ``the States should.''

#### 1. Authorization

As evidenced by an Attorney General's certification, or certification from delegated counsel, the State must have the legal authority to implement the program requiring the certification of operators of all community and nontransient noncommunity water systems and to require that the systems comply with the appropriate requirements of the program.

#### 2. Classification of Systems, Facilities, and Operators

A State's program must meet the following requirements:

<bullet> It must classify all community and nontransient noncommunity water systems based on indicators of potential health risk, which for example may include: (a) complexity, size, source water for treatment facilities, and (b) complexity, size for distribution systems. It must develop specific operator certification and renewal requirements for each level of classification.

<bullet> It must require owners of all community and nontransient noncommunity water systems to place the direct supervision of their water system, including each treatment facility and/or distribution system, under the responsible charge of an operator(s) holding a valid certification equal to or greater than the classification of the treatment facility and/or distribution system.

<bullet> It must require, at a minimum, that the operator(s) in responsible charge or equivalent must hold a valid certification equal to or greater than the classification of their water system, including each treatment facility and distribution system, as determined by the State.

<bullet> It must require that all operating personnel making process control/system integrity decisions about water quality or quantity that affect public health be certified.

<bullet> It must require that a designated certified operator be available for each operating shift.

#### 3. Operator Qualifications

States must require the following for an operator to become certified:

<bullet> Take and pass an exam that demonstrates that the operator has the necessary skills, knowledge, ability and judgement as appropriate for the classification. All exam questions must be validated.

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<bullet> Have a high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma (GED). States may allow experience and/or relevant training to be substituted for a high school diploma or GED. Education, training, or experience that is used to meet this requirement for any class of certification may not be used to meet the experience requirement.

<bullet> Have the defined minimum amount of on-the-job experience

for each appropriate level of certification. The amount of experience required increases with each classification level. Post high school education may be substituted for experience. Credit may be given for experience in a related field (e.g., wastewater). Experience that is used to meet the experience requirement for any class of certification may not be used to meet the education requirement.

#### Grandparenting

EPA recognizes that there are many competent small system operators that may not meet the initial requirements to become certified. EPA believes that States may need a transition period to allow these operators to continue to operate the system through ``grandparenting''. It is recommended that grandparenting determinations be based on factors such as system compliance history, operator experience and knowledge, system complexity, and lack of treatment.

If States choose to include a grandparenting provision in their programs, they must include the following requirements:

- <bullet> Grandparenting is permitted only to existing operator(s) in responsible charge of existing systems which, because of State law changes to meet these guidelines, must for the first time have a certified operator.

- <bullet> The system owner must apply for grandparenting for the operator(s) in responsible charge within two years of the effective date of the State's regulation.

- <bullet> The certification for the grandparented operator must be site specific and non-transferable to other operators.

- <bullet> After an operator is grandparented, he or she must, within some time period specified by the State, meet all requirements to obtain certification renewal, including the payment of any necessary fees, acquiring necessary training to meet the renewal requirements, and demonstrating the skills, knowledge, ability and judgement for that classification.

- <bullet> If the classification of the plant or distribution system changes to a higher level, then the grandparented certification will no longer be valid.

- <bullet> If a grandparented operator chooses to work for a different water system, he or she must meet the initial certification requirements for that system.

#### 4. Enforcement

The State agency with primary enforcement responsibility for the Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) Program must have regulations that meet the requirements of these guidelines and require community water systems and nontransient noncommunity water systems to comply with State operator certification requirements. In nonprimacy States, the Governor must determine which State Agency will have this responsibility. States must have appropriate enforcement capabilities, for example: administrative orders, bilateral compliance agreements, criminal or civil administrative penalties, and/or stipulated penalties.

States must have the ability to revoke operator certifications.

States must also have the ability to suspend operator certifications or take other appropriate enforcement action for operator misconduct. Examples of operator misconduct may include: fraud, falsification of application, falsification of operating records, gross negligence in operation, incompetence, and/or failure to use reasonable care or judgement in the performance of duties.

#### 5. Certification Renewal

A State's program must meet the following requirements:

<bullet> The State must establish training requirements for renewal based on the level of certification held by the operator.

<bullet> States must require all operators including grandparented operators to acquire necessary amounts and types of State approved training. States may determine other requirements as deemed necessary.

<bullet> States must have a fixed cycle of renewal not to exceed three years.

<bullet> The State must require an individual to recertify if the individual fails to renew or qualify for renewal within two years of the date that the certificate expired.

<bullet> States must pay special attention to identify specific renewal requirements for grandparented operators to ensure that they possess the knowledge, skills, ability and judgement to properly operate the system. This must be done by one or more of the following approaches or by an alternative approach approved by EPA.

<bullet> States may specify renewal requirements for grandparented operators on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration factors such as a system's compliance history and operator experience and knowledge. For systems that have a history of being out of compliance, any certification renewal decision should consider whether non-compliance is the result of actions or inactions by the system's owner or the system's operator.

<bullet> States may require specific training requirements for certification renewal at the first renewal cycle for grandparented operators. This training should include all of the information covered by the initial certification exam for the system classification level for which the operator was grandparented even though an initial certification exam may not be required for certification renewal.

<bullet> States may require operators with grandparented certificates to meet all of the initial certification requirements for the classification level for which the operator was grandparented, and thereby obtain certification within a reasonable time period specified by the State.

#### 6. Resources Needed To Implement the Program

States must provide sufficient resources to adequately fund and sustain the operator certification program (components include, but are not limited to: staff, data management, testing, enforcement, administration, and training approval). EPA recommends that States establish a dedicated fund that is self-sufficient.

#### 7. Recertification

The States must have a process for recertification of individuals whose certification has expired for a period exceeding two years. This process must include: review of the individual's experience and training, and reexamination. An individual is not certified with an expired certificate. The State may develop more stringent requirements for recertification for individuals whose certificates have expired, been revoked, or been suspended.

#### 8. Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement is important to the public health objectives of the program. It helps to ensure the relevancy and validity of the program, and the confidence of all interested parties.

States must include ongoing stakeholder involvement in the revision and operations of State operator certification programs. Public comment on rule revisions is not adequate stakeholder involvement. A stakeholder

board or advisory committee is strongly recommended.

Examples of stakeholders may include: operators, environmental/public health groups, the general public, consumer groups, technical assistance providers, utility managers, trainers, etc.

#### 9. Program Review

States must perform reviews of their operator certification programs. EPA recommends that States perform periodic internal reviews and occasional external/peer reviews. Examples of items to review include: regulations, exam items for relevancy and validity, compliance, enforcement, budget and staffing, training relevancy, training needs through examination performance, and data management system.

### III. Program Submittal Process

#### A. Submittal Schedule and Withholding Process

##### 1. New Programs

[Reserved]

##### 2. Equivalent Programs

[Reserved]

#### B. Submittal Contents

The submittal of operator certification programs to EPA by States must include the following:

##### 1. Initial Submittal

The submittal of operator certification programs to EPA by States must include the following:

- <bullet> The State Attorney General's certification, or certification from delegated counsel, that the State has the legal authority to implement the program requiring the certification of operators of all community and nontransient noncommunity water systems and to require that the systems comply with the appropriate requirements of the program;

- <bullet> A full description and explanation of how the State's operator certification program complies with or is substantially equivalent to the requirements of these guidelines; and

- <bullet> A copy of the State operator certification regulations.

##### 2. Subsequent Years

- <bullet> All annual program submittals subsequent to the initial submittal must include documentation and evaluation of ongoing program implementation; and

- <bullet> A new State Attorney General's certification, or certification from delegated counsel, if changes were made to the regulations or statutes and a copy of the revised regulations or statutes.

### IV. Definitions

Administrator--Means the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Available--Based on system size, complexity, and source water quality, a certified operator must be on site or able to be contacted as needed to initiate the appropriate action in a timely manner.

Community Water System (CWS)--A public water system providing water

to at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents.

Distribution System--Any combination of pipes, tanks, pumps, etc. which delivers water from the source(s) and/or treatment facility(ies) to the consumer.

Distribution System Complexity--Examples include: pressure zones, booster stations, storage tanks, fire protection, chlorination, non-residential consumers, cross connection potential, and/or demand variations.

Distribution System Size--Examples include: population served, number of service connections, size of pipes, total distance of pipe, and quantity of water distributed.

Grandparenting--The exemption for the existing operator(s) in responsible charge, as of the effective date of the State's regulation, from meeting the initial education and/or examination requirements for the class of certification the system has been assigned.

Nontransient Noncommunity (NTNC) Water Systems--Is a public water system that is not a community water system and that regularly serves at least 25 of the same persons over six months per year. Common types of NTNC water systems are those serving schools, day care centers, factories, restaurants, and hospitals.

Operating Shift--That period of time during which operator decisions that affect public health are necessary for proper operation of the system.

Primacy--Primary responsibility for administration and enforcement of the primary drinking water regulations and related requirements applicable to public water systems within a State.

Responsible Charge--The Operator(s) in Responsible Charge is defined as the person(s) designated by the owner to be the certified operator(s) who makes decisions regarding the daily operational activities of a public water system, water treatment facility and/or distribution system, that will directly impact the quality and/or quantity of drinking water.

Source Water--Examples include: type (surface water, groundwater, groundwater under the influence of surface water, purchased water), quality (variability), and/or protection (e.g., wellhead protection).

Treatment Facility--Any place(s) where a community water system or nontransient non-community water system alters the physical or chemical characteristics of the drinking water. Chlorination may be considered as a function of a distribution system.

Treatment Facility Complexity--Examples include: difficulty in controlling water quality, potential effect to the consumer and/or safety of the operator.

Treatment Facility Size (capacity)--Examples include: population served, number of service connections, and/or plant flow.

Validated Exam--An exam that is independently reviewed by subject matter experts to ensure that the exam is based on a job analysis and related to the classification of the system or facility.

## V. Acronyms

CWS--Community Water System

DWSRF--Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

EPA--United States Environmental Protection Agency

GED--General Equivalency Diploma

NDWAC--National Drinking Water Advisory Council

NTNCWS or NTNC--Nontransient Noncommunity Water System

PWSS--Program Public Water System Supervision Program  
SDWA--Safe Drinking Water Act

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