

GUIDELINE NO: 2.4
Drinking Water Operator/Water Quality Analyst Certification
Revised May 2008

GUIDELINE TITLE: DRINKING WATER OIT REQUIREMENTS

This guideline provides information on the requirements to extend, renew or re-obtain a water treatment or water distribution/water distribution and supply Operator-in-training (OIT) certificate. For general information about obtaining an OIT certificate for the first time, please refer to the “Certification Guide for Operators and Water Quality Analysts of Drinking Water Systems”. This guideline is divided into the following sections:

- OIT six month extension beyond sixteen months
- OIT renewal beyond initial three years
- Reissue expired OIT certificates
- Temporary 12 month OIT certificates

SIX MONTH EXTENSION (WHERE OPERATOR HAS NOT COMPLETED THE MANDATORY ENTRY LEVEL COURSE)

Purpose:

To outline the factors the Director will typically consider in deciding whether to grant a six month extension beyond the 16 months, and to allow the OIT time to take the course of study, as provided for under Section 9 (8) (b) of O.Reg.128/04.

Context:

An OIT certificate issued on or after August 1, 2005 expires 16 months from the day it was issued unless the individual completes the MOE’s mandatory Entry Level Drinking Water Course (ELC) for drinking water operators. The ELC is also a pre-requisite for an upgrade to a Class I operator certificate. If the ELC course is completed, the OIT certificate is extended to three years from the date it was first issued.

The Director may grant a six month extension if the Director is satisfied that the OIT will complete the mandatory course of study within the extension period.

Policy:

The circumstances under which the Director may typically grant such an extension are:

- The person holding an OIT was ill for an extended time during the 16 months, making it difficult or impossible for the person to take the ELC; or
- Enrollment in the ELC was not possible because the course had been cancelled or was fully booked. Operators must provide documentation from the Walkerton Clean Water Centre (WCWC) to support these claims;
- Person holding the OIT was enrolled as a full time student and demonstrated inability to take the ELC;

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- Person holding the OIT was not employed as an operator for a substantial period of time;
- The person held a temporary OIT and has transferred to a regular OIT; or
- Other unforeseen circumstances which made it impossible for an operator to complete the ELC that the Director considers valid.

Please note that operators are responsible for understanding the regulatory requirements for certification, therefore not being aware of the requirement to take the ELC as the only reason is not considered a valid reason for extension.

Process:

The applicant must submit the following information to the Certification Program Administrator before the application for an OIT certificate extension can be assessed:

1. Proof of enrollment in the ELC. Operators must submit information from the WCWC to confirm enrollment;
2. A letter requesting a six month OIT certificate extension which clearly states:
 - The reason for the extension request.
 - The date the operator is scheduled to take the classroom component of the ELC; and
3. Documentation supporting the reason for not completing the ELC within the 16 months period. Where a course has been cancelled or was fully booked confirmation of this fact is to be obtained from the WCWC by the applicant. In all cases, in order to grant such an extension, the Director must be satisfied that the applicant will be able to successfully complete the ELC by the end of the additional six month period.

Expiry Date:

The extended certificate shall have an expiry date six months from the date of the original expiry date of the 16 month OIT.

Fee:

There is no fee for a six month expiry certificate.

One Time Extension:

O. Reg. 128/04 does not allow OIT certificates to be extended by more than one six month extension. Operators must ensure that they will complete the ELC before the expiry date or they will not hold a valid operator's certificate.

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Once the ELC is completed, the operator must submit a copy of the Certificate of Completion to the Certification Program Administrator along with a written request that the certificate be extended. A new updated certificate will be issued and that certificate will be valid for three years from the original date of issue.

For example, if the original OIT was issued on September 30, 2006, it will expire on January 31, 2008. If the Ministry approves a six month temporary extension it will expire on July 31, 2008. Once the ELC has been completed, the new OIT certificate will have an expiry date of September 30, 2009.

Valid experience:

Operators must hold a valid certificate if they are performing operational duties. For this reason, operators will only be credited with the experience they gain while holding a valid operator certificate for future upgrades.

THREE YEAR RENEWAL (WHERE OPERATOR HAS NOT OBTAINED ONE YEAR OF VALID EXPERIENCE)**Purpose:**

To outline the factors the Director will typically consider in deciding whether to grant a 3 year renewal beyond the initial three years. This will allow the OIT time to secure the necessary experience to qualify for a Class I certificate, as provided for under Section 9 (11) of O.Reg. 128/04.

Context:

An OIT certificate issued under O. Reg. 128/04 expires 16 months from the day it was issued unless the person holding an OIT completes the Entry Level Drinking Water Course (ELC). The ELC is also a prerequisite for an upgrade to a Class I operator certificate. If the ELC is completed, the certificate is extended to three years from the date it was first issued. At the end of the 3 years the OIT certificate expires, as the OIT is expected to have secured a Class I certificate.

However, the Director has the discretion to renew the OIT certificate for one additional three year period if the OIT was unable to obtain at least 1 year of operator experience while holding an OIT certificate, as required in order to qualify for a Class I certificate.

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Policy:

The circumstances under which the Director may typically grant an additional three year renewal for the purpose of gaining experience are:

- The OIT was ill for an extended time during the three years and therefore was unable to secure 1 year of experience;
- The OIT works fewer hours per year than required to secure 1 year of experience in three years;
- The OIT was not employed as an operator for a portion of the certification period and is unable to meet the experience requirements for a certificate upgrade; or
- Other reasons the Director considers valid.

In all cases, in order to grant such a renewal the Director must be satisfied that the OIT will be able to secure the necessary experience at the end of the additional 3 year period. Per Section 9(8)b of O. Reg. 128/04, a renewal may be made only once.

An OIT certificate renewed under O. Reg. 128/04 subsection 9(11) which has expired has no further options; the certificate is revoked under O.Reg. 128/04 subsection 19.6. In this case the individual must reapply for an OIT, course and exam credits will not be carried over to any new certificate.

Mandatory Renewal Course:

Completion of the **Mandatory Renewal Course** is a requirement for an operator to renew their OIT certificate under Section 9(11). For more information about the course, please contact the Walkerton Clean Water Centre at 1-866-515-0550 or visit their website at www.wcwc.ca

Process:

Applicants who want to obtain a three year OIT certificate renewal must:

1. Submit a request for a drinking water OIT renewal;
2. Pay the required fee;
3. Attach a letter detailing the reasons for the certificate renewal request to the application form. This letter should be signed by the operator's supervisor. If the OIT requires a renewal because they work fewer hours per year than are required to secure 1 year of experience, the letter should identify the number of hours the OIT performs operational duties each week. If the person holding an OIT is not employed as an operator, they must include a statement about their employment status in the letter; and
4. Submit proof of completing the Mandatory Renewal Course

REISSUE EXPIRED CERTIFICATE**Purpose:**

To state the requirements to obtain a new OIT certificate once the original certificate issued under Section 9 (5) has expired and the requirements under Section 9 (4)(c) have been met.

Policy:

If the original OIT has expired the certificate will not normally be renewed unless the following conditions are satisfied.

OIT expired for less than 20 months:

1. Successfully complete the ELC and forward a copy of the course certificate to the Certification Program Administrator; and
2. Submit a written request to have the balance of the OIT certificate issued

Expiry Date: The reissued certificate shall have an expiry date three years from the original date of issue.

Fee: There is no fee for the extension of the certificate.

OIT has been expired for 20 or more months:

1. Successfully complete the ELC and forward a copy of the course certificate to the Certification Program Administrator;
2. Submit an OIT certificate issuing form; and
3. Pay the required issuing form fee \$30.00.

Expiry Date: The reissued certificate shall have an expiry date 3 years from the date of issue.

If more than 5 years have lapsed since the OIT or Class I exam was previously written, the OIT or Class I exam must be re-written.

Any experience an operator gains while they do not hold a valid certificate cannot be used toward a future upgrade.

The Director may waive the requirement to complete the ELC if the applicant has not been employed as a drinking water operator while holding the OIT certificate.

TEMPORARY 12 MONTH OPERATOR-IN-TRAINING CERTIFICATE**Purpose:**

To explain ‘temporary’ 12 month OITs and how to renew these certificates. This section will also explain how an individual moves from holding a ‘temporary’ OIT to a holding a ‘regular’ OIT.

Context:

Individuals who receive an OIT certificate after August 1, 2005 will receive a 16 month certificate. This certificate is extended to three years if the OIT takes the Ministry’s Entry Level Drinking Water Course (ELC) for drinking water operators within that 16 month period.

An exception to taking the ELC has been provided under O. Reg. 128/04 for individuals who work as an OIT for no more than four consecutive months in a seven month period. To secure this temporary OIT certificate the individual must have grade 12 or the equivalent, and pass the OIT exam.

A temporary OIT certificate expires after 12 months. To renew a temporary OIT certificate, the individual must pass the Mandatory Certificate Renewal Course or the ELC or other courses/training as approved by the ‘Director’ as a pre-requisite for the first temporary OIT renewal. A temporary 12 month certificate will not be renewed if during the previous 12 months the OIT worked more than four months as an operator and intends to work more than four months as an operator during the next 12 month period. In this event please see the section below on Transferring from a Temporary 12 Month OIT Certificate to a Regular OIT Certificate.

Policy:**Obtaining a Temporary OIT**

A person wishing to secure a temporary 12 month OIT certificate must:

1. Pass the applicable OIT exam within the previous five years
2. Submit an OIT certificate issuing form;
3. Pay the temporary OIT fee of \$30.00.

Each time an applicant applies for a temporary OIT, a new OIT will be issued. Once the OIT exam has been passed, it does not need to be taken again, unless five years has lapsed since the last examination was taken and passed.

Renewing a Temporary OIT

A temporary OIT certificate normally will be renewed if the following conditions are satisfied:

1. Successfully complete the Mandatory Renewal Course;
2. Submit an OIT certificate issuing form;

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3. Pay the required fee of \$30.00.

The expiry date of the new certificate will be 12 months from the expiry of the date of issue.

A temporary OIT certificate will be issued no more than four times per individual. The Mandatory Renewal Course only needs to be completed once every three years.

If more than five years have lapsed since the OIT exam or Class I exam was previously written, the OIT or Class I exam must be re-written and passed.

Transferring from a temporary OIT to a regular OIT Certificate

A person holding a temporary 12 month OIT certificate may end up working more than four months as an operator while holding the certificate. If this situation occurs, and the operator wishes to maintain an operator certificate he/she must apply for a regular OIT Certificate.

Prior to the expiry of the temporary OIT certificate, the individual may complete the Drinking Water Operator-in-Training Certificate Issuing Form (Form 1859b), the form used to secure a 'regular' OIT certificate.

The applicant has two options:

Option 1: Extend their existing operator certificate by four months.

The applicant will be issued a regular OIT certificate with an expiry date 16 months from the original date of issue (or four months longer than the previous temporary certificate). This option allows an individual to transfer to a regular OIT Certificate at no cost.

Option 2: Issue a new OIT certificate.

The applicant will be issued a new regular OIT certificate. The expiry date will be 16 months from the date of issuing. A \$30 fee is required. The operator must also complete the Mandatory Renewal Course.

All operator experience gained while holding a valid 'temporary' 12 month OIT may be used towards a Class 1 certificate application.

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