



We work with others to protect the health of the people of Washington State by ensuring safe and reliable drinking water.



Operator Certification Update and Status

Washington State Department of Health
Office of Drinking Water

DWAG

- Water Utilities are key community and economic vitality indicators
- Ensure Environmental and public health protection
- We need to hear from this group on water sector issues
- You can always send an email or make a phone call if you're not comfortable speaking to the group

Fun with Numbers

- We currently have:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | OIT |
|------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|
| WDS | 854 | | | | |
| WDM | 1866 | 1638 | 597 | 357 | 455 |
| WTPO | 612 | 309 | 205 | 112 | 457 |
| CCS | 2073 | | | | |
| BAT | 1765 | | | | |

- 281 new certified operators in 2021
- 572 certified operators failed to renew for 2022 (14%).
 - >50% certified operator turnover in the last 5 years.

Reason for Concern?

- We've had ~4,000 certified operators for the last 15 years; but we've seen a population increase of over 20% in that time.
 - Every County in the State sees a 1% population increase per year
 - We also see increased:
 - Infrastructure
 - Government Regulation
 - Social Media Stresses
 - Capacity Demands
 - Technology

Workforce Issues

● Job Availability

- Who, what, when, where, why, and how do we hire?

● Recruitment

- Where are the new operators coming from?

● Retention

- How do we keep Certified Operators in the industry?

Job Availability (Catch 22)

- Board Member Training
- More investment in apprenticeship programs
- Work study programs
- Internships
- Expand what qualifies as experience
- Percentage of salary programs
- Summer jobs

Recruitment

- How do we get people interested in utility work?
- How do we increase diversity?
- Where are new operators coming from?
 - High schools
 - College
 - Military
- How can ODW support this effort?

Contact Information



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