

Ensuring your operator has the correct certification for the facility

Knowing your system’s grade and the operator certification class your operator should hold is important to stay in compliance. To help, note the following:

- Your system operator, that is in direct charge, must be certified for the class of the facility and at or above the grade of your facility. (Refer to the table below.) See Arizona Administrative Code (AAC) R18-5-104(A) for details.
- If an operator replaces an operator in direct charge of your system, the new operator must be certified for the applicable class and at or above the grade of the facility before they begin as the system’s operator directly in charge.
- In the absence of the operator in direct charge, the operator in charge of the facility must be certified at a grade no lower than one grade below the grade of the facility, while the system replaces the direct operator.
- All current operators of your system must be on file with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ).

For more information about operator certification, visit azdeq.gov/opcert.

Grades of Wastewater Treatment Plants and Collection Systems

Treatment Grade ¹ vs Population	1	2	3	4
Stabilization ponds	<=2,000	>2,000		
Aerated lagoons		Any population		
A facility that employs biological treatment based upon the activated sludge principle		<5,000	5,001 to 20,000	>20,000
Trickling filters		<5,000	5,001 to 25,000	>25,000
A variation of biological treatment based on the activated sludge principle that requires specialized knowledge, including contact stabilization			<20,000	>20,000 ²
Wastewater treatment plant not designated as a Grade 2, 3, or 4	Any population			

Collection System Grade	1 ³	2	3	4
Collection System Population	<2,500	2,501 to 10,000	10,001 to 25,000	>25,000

¹Primary treatment grade.

²Not stated in rule, placed here to infer this item follows normal activated sludge plants listed above.

³Grade 1 collection systems are exempted from operator certification requirements if connected to a treatment plant, A.A.C.R18-5-102.B.

QUESTIONS?

ADEQ would like to help your facility remain in compliance with all requirements. If you have questions, please contact the inspector who last visited your facility, or contact the manager of Inspection, Compliance and Enforcement at 602-771-4479.