

When You Lose a Certified Operator: What Next?

Public water and wastewater systems may lose operators at any time for various reasons, so the system owners must ensure there is always an operator in **direct responsible charge (DRC)** monitoring their system. This operator must be certified for the facility's class and for the same grade or above.¹ If your system needs to replace a DRC or additional operators, we have some helpful resources available. Our Operator Certification team can also help with your questions or concerns.

Q: How do I find a certified operator?

Visit the [Water and Wastewater Certified Operators Database](#) to search all active certified operators in Arizona. Search by name, city, certification type, class and more. A spreadsheet is updated monthly for download on the database page, but database search results are updated in real time.

Q: How do I find my public water system grade?

Check the grade of your public water system at [Drinking Water Watch](#). Wastewater and reclaimed water systems should check their most recent permit (Section 2.1) or contact our Wastewater Inspections unit at azpdes@azdeq.gov.

Q: How do I hire a certified operator?

Once you've ensured an operator has the proper grade and class of certification and you can enter into a contract. We have an [Operator/System contract template](#) that covers basic legal responsibilities for owner and operator.

Q: What are the regulatory requirements for a public water system owner and an operator?

Regulatory requirements for public water system owners and operators are found in the Arizona Administrative Code, Title 18, Chapter 5, Article 1. Contact us for help!

Q: Can a system owner become a certified operator?

Yes. If you have a high school diploma or equivalent, you can [take the Operator Certification exam](#). A score of 70% or higher is required to get certified. Study resources are available at [Water Professional International \(WPI\)](#) and in ADEQ's [How To Become Certified](#) guide.

Q: Who will take my samples while I do not have an operator?

Although operators have many vital responsibilities at a facility, you do not need to be a certified operator to take a sample. However, proper training is required | [Drinking Water Compliance Sampling Procedures](#) >

Questions or concerns? Contact us:

602-771-0100

azopcert@azdeq.gov