



# Ethics in Operations

Jason Bobko

Drinking Water

Inspections, Compliance, Enforcement, and Operator Certification



- Important definitions
- Why ethics are important as an operator
- Rule relating to ethics
- Examples of situations relating to ethics



- **Certified Operator:** An individual who holds a current certificate issued by the Department in the field of water or wastewater treatment, water distribution, or wastewater collection. (R18-5-101)
- **Ethics:** Moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity.
- **Integrity:** The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

*What governs how you conduct yourself as an operator?*

- **Protecting public health and the environment**
  - SDWA regulates the nation's public drinking water supplies
  - SDWA authorizes the EPA to set health-based standards to protect against naturally occurring and man-made contaminants
- **Ensuring public trust**
  - Water systems are responsible for ensuring that appropriate samples are collected to comply with regulations
  - ADEQ depends on water systems for the integrity and quality of drinking water data received for compliance



- Proper operation of a facility and not falsifying records. (R18-5-109, B)



- Certificates may be revoked, suspended or put on probation if an operator:
  - Operates a facility in a manner that violates federal or state law
  - Negligently operates a facility or negligently supervises the operation of a facility
  - Endangers public health, safety or welfare



- (Continued) Certificates may be revoked, suspended, or put on probation if an operator:
  - Obtains, or attempts to obtain, a certificate by fraud, deceit or misrepresentation
  - Engages in fraud, deceit or misrepresentation in the operation or supervision of a facility
  - Knowingly or negligently prepares a false or fraudulent report or record regarding the operation or supervision of a facility

- (Continued) Certificates may be revoked, suspended, or put on probation if an operator:
  - Fails to comply with a Department order or order of a court
  - Fails to comply with the terms or conditions of probation or suspension
  - Fails to cooperate with an investigation by the Department including failing or refusing to provide information



- Upon unethical actions, certificates can be
  - Revoked
  - Put on probation
  - Suspended



# Operator Certification Forms

- Submit accurate PDHs

**Operator Certification Renewal Form**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Operator Number OP0: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: (Last Four Digits Only) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

PWS/WWS Name and Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate the type, grade, and expiration date for each certificate that you hold.

TYPE	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	EXP. DATE
Water Distribution					
Water Treatment					
Wastewater Collection					
Wastewater Treatment					

Please check how many certificates you are renewing    1 (fee is \$150)    2 (fee is \$200)    3 (fee is \$250)    4 (fee is \$300)

Date	Description of Training	PDHs

PDH TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

**The following must accompany this form:**

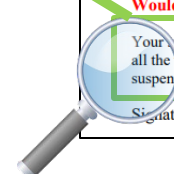
- Renewal fee made payable to ADEQ; only form of accepted payment are: Money Order, Check or Cash. (R18-14-301). Cash must be exact change

**Would you like to be subscribed to the Operator Certification List Serve?**    YES     NO

Your signature below certifies that the operator certification renewal form is correct and you have attended and completed all the training listed on the renewal form above. Understand that any falsification may subject the certificate(s) to denial, suspension, probation and/or revocation. (R18-5-109). Allow 30 days for processing.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature below certifies that the operator certification renewal form is correct and you have attended and completed all the training listed on the renewal form above. Understand that any falsification may subject the certificate(s) to denial, suspension, probation and/or revocation. (R18-5-109). Allow 30 days for processing.



- Submit accurate test scores

**ADEQ** Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

**OPERATOR CERTIFICATION  
NEW CERTIFICATE FORM**

How did you earn your New Certificate? Gateway Examination  or Reciprocity

Please check how many new certificate(s) 1 (\$65.00 fee) 2 (\$130.00 fee) 3 (\$195.00 fee) 4 (\$260.00 fee)

Use this form if you recently passed an operator certification exam from Gateway Community College or received reciprocity from ADEQ. The new certificate fee is \$65.00 per new certificate. If you recently passed an exam you will need to include your Individual Mastery Report (IMR) which you received from the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) via email for each new certificate. Print the IMR email showing your first and last name along with the exam breakdown and passing score. This document will need to accompany this form and \$65.00 fee. If you earned your new certificate from reciprocity only include this form and fee(s). New Certificates will not be issued until this form and applicable fee(s) have been received by ADEQ. If this is your first certificate with ADEQ leave the Operator Number space below blank.

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**The following must accompany this form:**

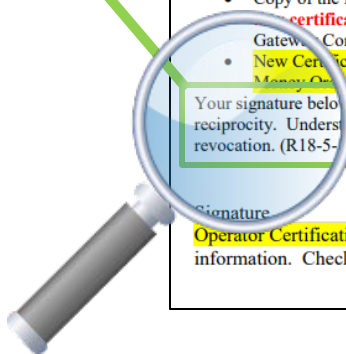
- Copy of the Individual Mastery Report (IMR) email from the Association of Boards of Certification (ABC) for each certificate. Showing the first and last name and a passing score. (only for new certificates earned from a Gateway Community College ABC examination)
- New Certificate fee of \$65.00 per new certificate made payable to ADEQ. Only form of accepted payment are: Money Order, Check or Cash. (R18-14-201). Cash must be exact change.

Your signature below certifies that the information above is correct and you earned the certificate(s) from examination or reciprocity. Understand that any falsification on this form may subject the certificate(s) to denial, suspension, probation and/or revocation. (R18-5-109). Allow 30 days for processing.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Operator Certification List Serve sends out renewal reminders, workshop notifications, and more operator related information. Check YES if you want to be subscribed. YES

Your signature below certifies that the information above is correct and you earned the certificate(s) from examination or reciprocity. Understand that any falsification on this form may subject the certificate(s) to denial, suspension, probation and/or revocation. (R18-5-109). Allow 30 days for processing.



- Fill out chain of custody sheet as sample is being taken so that data is accurate (date, time, location, site description, sample type, sample name)
- Make sure sampling equipment is calibrated correctly
- Don't time travel
- Don't use faulty info



*If there is an issue with your data, contact your county assistance coordinator.*

- Told employees to erase evidence of positive test results
- Coliform testing samples were inappropriately recorded
- Indicted on felony charge:
  - On three years of probation
  - Legal fines
  - Community service
  - Noncompliance could lead to two years in prison

- Altered water sample test results
- Time in jail and a fine



- Submitted fabricated PDH credits to renew certificates
- Was audited by ADEQ
- Had to earn more PDH credits and resubmit renewal form

Date	Description of Training	PDHs

Your signature below certifies that the operator certification renewal form is correct and you have attended and completed all the training listed on the renewal form above. Understand that any falsification may subject the certificate(s) to denial, suspension, probation and/or revocation. (R18-5-109). Allow 30 days for processing.

PDH TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

The following must accompany this form:

- Renewal fee made payable to ADEQ; only form of accepted payment are: Money Order, Check or Cash. (R18-14-301). Cash must be exact change

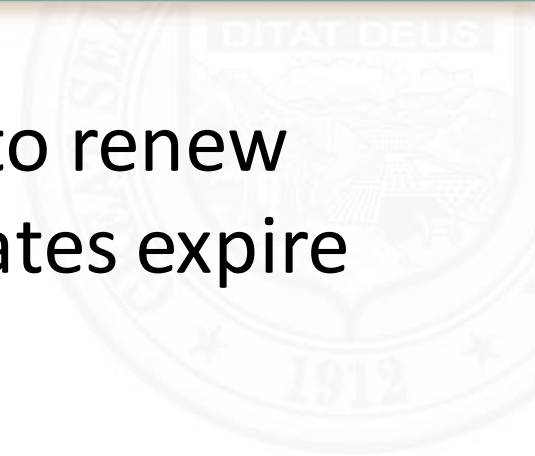
Would you like to be subscribed to the Operator Certification List Serve? YES  NO

Your signature below certifies that the operator certification renewal form is correct and you have attended and completed all the training listed on the renewal form above. Understand that any falsification may subject the certificate(s) to denial, suspension, probation and/or revocation. (R18-5-109). Allow 30 days for processing.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



- You have not yet earned 30 PDHs to renew your certificates, and your certificates expire in one month.





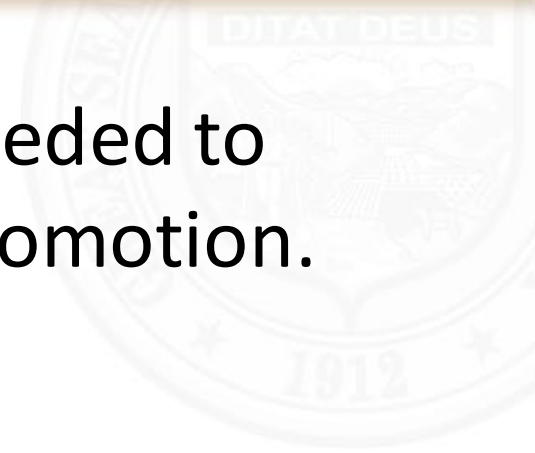
- You have not yet earned 30 PDHs to renew your certificates, and your certificates expire in one month.
- Falsify PDHs and send in certification renewal form to ADEQ.



- You have not yet earned 30 PDHs to renew your certificates, and your certificates expire in one month.
- Contact ADEQ to find out what options there are. There may be trainings you can attend within the month, as well as some workbooks to complete to meet the required 30 PDHs.



- You did not pass a test that you needed to pass in order to be eligible for a promotion.



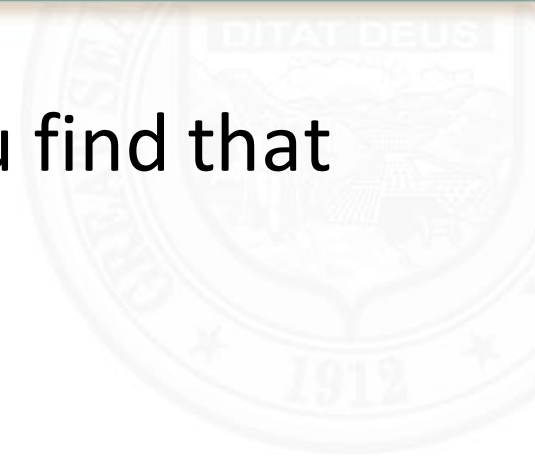
- You did not pass a test that you needed to pass in order to be eligible for a promotion.
- You decide to alter your Individual Mastery Report (test results) to show that you passed. You send that in with your form and fee for the new/upgraded certificate.



- You did not pass a test that you needed to pass in order to be eligible for a promotion.
- Do not submit your test score or new certificate form. Check what areas need to be studied most based on the mastery report, and take the test again when prepared.



- After testing for total coliform, you find that the sample tested positive.



- After testing for total coliform, you find that the sample tested positive.
- You throw away the sample and any evidence that showed it was positive. You rewrite the entire data sheet. You tell staff to follow suit.



- After testing for total coliform, you find that the sample tested positive.
- Keep the sample and all evidence that showed it was positive. It is recommended to contact ADEQ. If it was E. coli positive, it is required to contact ADEQ by the end of the day. Complete the repeat sampling that needs to be done.





- You forget to take a sample during your shift.  
What do you do?



- Public safety is compromised
- Certificates revoked or suspended
- Losing employment
- Fines
- Prison



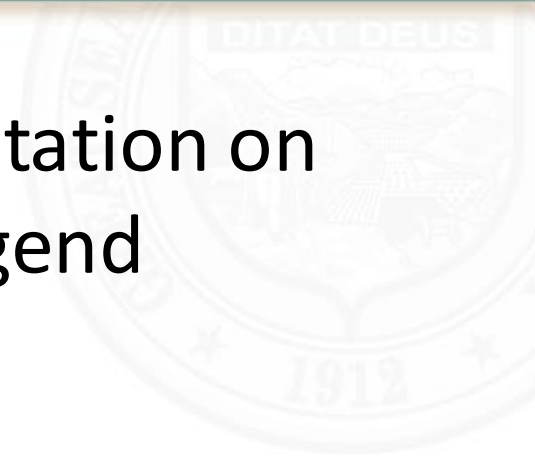
- The ADEQ Way:
  - Evaluate everything we do for its impact on the mission.
  - Hire only those who believe in our way and have a passion for their work.
  - Train those who cannot, replace those who will not, and promote those who excel.
  - Never hide a problem – respect others enough to be honest, even if the truth is uncomfortable.
  - Do not blame, but hold each other accountable.

- (Continued) The ADEQ Way:
  - Involve end users early and often when creating or improving services.
  - Never stop asking why.
  - Continuously design and redesign for quality and radical simplicity.
  - Freely discuss, promptly decide, and totally commit.
  - Do not fear failure.

- Integrity: It all rests on you
- Make good choices



- Cahoon, Jenny. PowerPoint Presentation on Ethics in Data Reporting, 2019. Legend Technical Services.



*Our mission is to protect and enhance public health  
and the environment in Arizona.*

# Questions?

Jason Bobko, ADEQ  
602-771-4253 or [bobko.jason@azdeq.gov](mailto:bobko.jason@azdeq.gov)

<https://azdeq.gov/OperatorCertification>

