Welcome to the Colorado Drinking Water Career Roadmap!
This is a tool for current operators and utility workers to learn about the jobs, skills, education requirements and certification processes necessary to progress in the drinking water profession.

Just Getting Started
Whether you have been working as a non-certified operator, field worker or in another position inside the water industry, use this guide to help you through the process of becoming a certified operator. Information includes education opportunities available to help you, required competencies, sample job descriptions and current job openings.

Details Inside »

Current Certified Operator
For operators with an existing certification, this guide outlines how you can further advance your career by expanding your level of certification. Information includes education opportunities available to help you, required competencies to get to the next level, and current job openings.

Details Inside »
Which certification is right for you?

Water Distribution Operator
A water distribution system is the essential link between the water supply source and the consumer. It is not just the main that runs down a street, quite the contrary. It is an elaborate conveyance system that allows water to be moved through miles of piping before reaching the consumer’s tap. Pumps allow water to move through the system; valves allow water pressure and flow direction to be regulated along the way. The Water Distribution System Operator is responsible for the maintenance of water mains, water services, fire hydrants, water valves and backflow devices located within a service area.

Water Treatment Operator
Water treatment plant operators operate and maintain the pumps and motors that move water through treatment systems. They monitor the indicators at their plants and make adjustments as necessary. They read instruments and gauges to make sure that plant equipment and processes are working properly. They take samples and run tests to determine the quality of the water being produced. At times, they may adjust the amount of chemicals, such as chlorine and fluoride, being added to the water.

The specific duties of plant operators depend on the type and size of the plant. In a small plant, one operator may be responsible for maintaining all of the systems. This operator would most likely work during the day and be on call during nights and weekends. In medium-size plants, operators may work in shifts to monitor the plant at all hours of the day. In large plants, multiple operators work the same shifts and are more specialized in their duties, often relying on computerized systems to help monitor plant processes.†
Water Treatment & Distribution Operator

Level S Operators work in facilities that serve a population of 3,300 or less, and that are classified as a Level D water treatment facilities and as a Level 1 water distribution systems. Level S certification is a combination of Water Treatment Level D and Water Distribution Level 1 licenses. As such, specific duties will often be a combination of these two roles. The advantage of the Level S certification for small businesses is that fewer certificates are needed and required to be maintained to be in compliance with regulations.

† Source: US. Bureau of Labor Statistics
* Salary rate for Aurora Water in 2011
Certification Information†

You must have either a high school diploma or GED to apply to take an exam.

Exams are required before any certifications are given. After passing the exam, you must pay the required fees.

- Water Distribution Exam: Levels - 4, 3, 2, 1. Entry level is “1”.
- Water Treatment Exam: Levels - A, B, C, D. Entry level is “D”.
- Water Treatment & Distribution Level S Exam - These exams are for a water operator working in a facility that serves a population of 3,300 or less, and that are classified as a Level “D” water treatment facilities and as a Level “1” water distribution systems. Level S certification is equivalent to holding both a Water Treatment Level D and Water Distribution Level 1 exam.

The “Exam Instructions / Dates & Locations” form can be found by visiting http://www.ocpoweb.com.

Exams must be taken sequentially; i.e., you must be a certified “D” before moving up to the “C” exam, or you must be a certified “1” operator before moving up to the “2” exam.

Exams are held in different locations. There are three (3) cycles each year in which you can apply to take an exam. Dates and locations are posted on an “Exam Instruction Form.” The new cycle information is published approximately two (2) months prior to the deadline.

To learn more click here.

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† Source: ocpoweb.com November 2012