

Ohio EPA

Operator Certification Advisory Council

Class 4 Examination Frequently Asked Questions

September 5, 2008

1. Where can I find the eligibility requirements for Class IV certification?

OAC Rule 3745-7-6(C)(2) contains the requirements for Class IV certification. We would encourage you to review and understand the eligibility requirements. If you still have questions concerning your eligibility you may contact the Operator Certification Unit.

2. Can I review a class IV exam of someone who has passed?

Yes. The Council and Ohio EPA encourage you contact the Operator Certification Unit [614-644-2752 or 866-411 OPCT (6728)] in order to schedule an appointment to review an example exam before submitting your exam.

3. Should I include copies of the 12 most recent MORs for my facility?

No. Provide a 12 month summary of actual operating data (i.e. monthly averages and/or ranges of data such as pumping, chemical doses, treatment parameters, raw and finished water quality, plant flows, process control flow rates and solids concentrations, chemical doses, % removals, sludge volume index (SVI), mean cell residence time (MCRT), settleable solids, influent and effluent quality, etc). This data should be referred to in your discussions of the plant operation.

4. Should I include photographs of equipment, basins, buildings, etc. in my examination?

Pictures need only be included if they help to explain what you are describing in your exam.

5. Can I just provide copies of my current and past position descriptions to answer questions in the "Experience" section?

No. The Council is not looking for formal job descriptions. Please provide a detailed explanation of your duties in your own words.

6. Should I include copies of facility plans, annual reports, engineering reports, etc in my examination?

No. Unless otherwise indicated, your exam should not include documents prepared by others, such as facility plans, annual reports, engineering reports, etc. The exam must be in your own words, concise and address all of the above issues. It is appropriate for you to summarize these documents if necessary to respond to a question.

7. I'm not involved in my facility's budgeting process, the distribution/collection system, safety program, etc. Do I still have to write on these topics since these areas are not my responsibility?

Yes. The applicant is expected to provide responses to all areas in the class IV examination. The applicant may have to research areas in which they are not familiar.

8. My facility wholesales water and does not own or operate the distribution system or only has satellite sewer systems. Do I have to write about the distribution system or satellite sewer system?

Yes. The applicant is expected to provide response to all areas in the class IV examination. The applicant may have to research areas in which they are not familiar.

9. Can I include charts/graphs from a co-worker's Class IV examination in my examination?

No. The exam must be in your own words.

10. Can I use design information from "Ten States Standards" for the design vs. actual discussion of my plant if the design information for the plant is not available?

If you can not determine the design information for your facility then you could use "Ten States Standards". The Council would like to see a comparison of actual conditions to design criteria for each treatment unit to assist in determining the percentage of design capacity currently being used.

11. My facility contracts out solids handling, what should I include in my examination?

You need to demonstrate a general understanding of regulations governing residual disposal and the process used to dispose of residuals. You should research your contractor's residuals reuse/disposal practices and provide a discussion of compliance with the governing regulations.

12. My facility uses SCADA, what level of detail do you want to see in the examination concerning the SCADA system at my facility?

Discuss how you are monitoring and controlling the individual treatment units using your SCADA system.

13. My facility accepts septage, what should I include in my examination?

Describe and discuss how much your facility receives, from where, average concentration, loadings and the impacts of the septage on your treatment plant.

14. Who evaluates the examination?

At least 4 members of the Operator Certification Advisory Council (Council)

15. Who serves on the Council?

There are eight (8) voluntary Council members that are appointed by the Director. The membership consists of two (2) Ohio EPA employees, one (1) from the Division of Surface Water and (1) from the Division of Drinking and Ground Waters, Two (2) members holding valid class III or class IV public water system operator certifications and actively employed by public water systems at the time of appointment. Two (2) members holding valid class III or class IV wastewater works operator certifications and actively employed by wastewater works at the time of appointment. Two (2) members who are registered professional engineers who are actively employed in the field of sanitary or environmental engineering at the time of appointment.

Except for the two Ohio EPA members, no two council members can be employed by the same entity. Members of the council are appointed for a term not to exceed five years and shall not serve longer than two consecutive terms. Any vacancy occurring on the council can be filled by the Director's appointment of a member for the balance of the unexpired term. A Council member appointed for the balance of an unexpired term may be appointed for up to two additional consecutive full terms.

16. How are the examinations scored?

The Council members reviewing the examinations use the guidance and the review checklist to determine if the applicant addressed the questions included in the guidance. The Council members discuss the examination and reach concurrence as to whether the applicant passed the examination.

17. How does the Council determine which exams are reviewed each month?

It is the Council's goal to review exams within 1 month of the distribution of the exam to Council members, if 4 copies are submitted. Letters regarding your exam status should be sent within three weeks of the Council meeting when the exam was discussed. Resubmitted exams are the Council's first priority; then the review of new exams.

18. If I have to resubmit my exam, how long do I have to complete revisions?

4 months.

19. Has the Council ever "failed" an applicant?

Exams not meeting the guidance criteria are returned for additional information. Upon review of 3 submittals the Council determines if a recommendation should be made to the Director to deny Class IV certification. In the event of a denial the applicant may reapply to take the examination.

20. Does anyone ever pass on the first attempt?

Yes.

21. Can I meet with the Council if I have questions concerning what I need to include in my exam?

Yes. Contact someone in the Operator Certification Unit [614-644-2752 or 866-411 OPCT (6728)] to set up an appointment.

22. What format should I use to submit the exam?

The exam must be a typewritten report including discussions on experience, administration, budget, plant, system, safety, planning, research, design, staff training and development and publications.

23. How long will it take to find out if I have successfully passed the Class IV exam?

If 4 exams are submitted you should be informed of you results within 3 weeks of the Council meeting at which your exam was discussed.