



OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM UPDATES

Chad Hardy

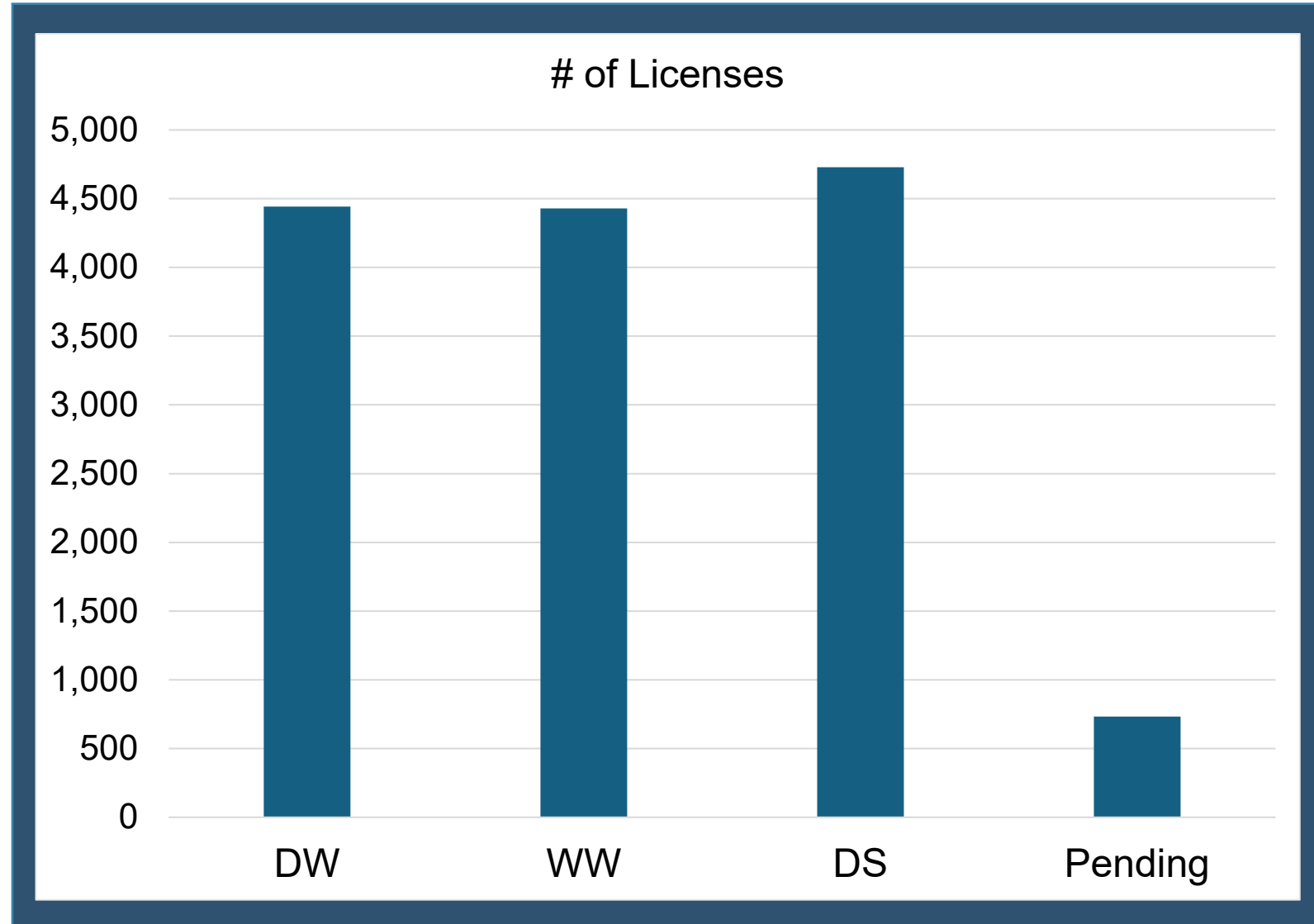
Operator Certification Program
Division of Water Resource Management
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Focus on Change | March 4, 2025



LICENSE NUMBERS (ACTIVE)

- 4,442 drinking water (DW) treatment plant operators.
- 4,429 wastewater (WW) treatment plant operators.
- 4,729 water distribution system (DS) operators.
- 13,600 operators total.
- 716 awaiting licensure (pending).





PASS PERCENTAGES

Overall Exam Pass % January – December 2024

Drinking Water		Wastewater		Distribution
43%	A	39%	1	53%
58%	B	37%	2	57%
49%	C	56%	3	75%
68%	D	33%	4	N/A



2024 TOP EXAM PERFORMERS

DRINKING WATER

DWA	Phillip Oller — 92%
DWB	David Kinchen — 94%
DWC	Iulia Siemen — 97%
DWD	Theodor Weihe — 96%

DISTRIBUTION

DS1	Todd Schneide — 98%
DS2	Michael Good — 100%
DS3	Cody Chamburs — 96%
DS4	N/A

WASTEWATER

WWA	Andrew Pfeiffer — 93%
WWB	Stephen Husak — 94%
WWC	Dexter Castro-Igartus — 95% Austin Larson — 95%
WWD	Megan Johnson — 80%



RECENT UPDATES

- DEP's paperless initiative is moving forward.
 - Electronic issued licenses are being developed and anticipated for 2025.
 - Electronic licenses will be able to be printed from home or work.
 - Electronic licenses will contain a QR code for immediate verification purposes.
 - Electronic licenses may be sent via email or retrieved via online portal.
 - No need to request and pay for duplicate licenses.
- PSI candidate scheduling webpages have been updated with a new look, but the process remains the same.



RECENT UPDATES

State of Florida
Department of Environmental Protection

ISSUED: 02/04/2025

LICENSE NO.: 0015708

SHANNON L. AVERA

IS LICENSED UNDER PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 403, FLORIDA STATUTES
AS A LEVEL 2 DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS OPERATOR.

VALID UNTIL: 04/30/2027



Ron DeSantis
GOVERNOR

Alexis A. Lambert
SECRETARY

DISPLAY IS REQUIRED BY LAW



RECENT UPDATES

- California State University at Sacramento (CSUS) created a Volume III of the **Operation of Wastewater Treatment Plants**.
 - This volume is divided into two Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) approved enrollments (Enrollments A and B).
 - Volume III has replaced the “Advance Treatment” enrollment.
 - Applicants will only be required to complete Volume III to be eligible for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Class B state exam.
 - This applies **only** to CSUS, not to any current approved coursework through other providers.
- As of Oct. 1, 2024, the Operator Certification Program (OCP) is also managing Onsite Sewage Program (OSP) licensure.
 - OCP administers exams for registered septic tank contractors and the Accelerated Certification Training (ACT) I, II and III.
 - OCP now issues certifications to registered septic tank contractors.



PROPOSED RULE CHANGES

Operator Certification Program Updates



PROPOSED RULE CHANGES

- In 2023, the Florida Legislature directed DEP to implement license reciprocity as part of the OCP (Senate Bill 162, codified as Chapter 2023-204, Laws of Florida).
- The law directed DEP to adopt rules for issuing licenses by reciprocity for:
 - Licensed out-of-state operators.
 - Individuals serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.
 - Temporary operators during a declared state of emergency.
- A Notice of Rule Development for Chapter 62-602, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) was published Nov. 1, 2023.
- A public workshop was held on Dec. 17, 2024.



PROPOSED RULE CHANGES

- Changes being proposed to the following rules as part of this rulemaking effort:
 - Rule 62-602.200, F.A.C., “Definitions.”
 - Rule 62-602.230, F.A.C., “Approval of Residence or Correspondence Courses.”
 - Rule 62-602.250, F.A.C., “Criteria for Determining Eligible Experience.”
 - Rule 62-602.300, F.A.C., “Qualifications for Operator Licensure.”
 - Rule 62-602.360, F.A.C., “Licensing Requirements for Non-Florida Operators.”
 - Rule 62-602.410, F.A.C., “Applications for Examination.”
 - Rule 62-602.420, F.A.C., “Applications for License.”
 - Rule 62-602.600, F.A.C., “Fees for Operator Examinations and Licensure.”
 - Rule 62-602.650, F.A.C., “Duties of Operators.”



PROPOSED RULE CHANGES

- No changes proposed to the following rules:
 - Rule 62-602.270, F.A.C., “Eligibility for Operator Examinations.”
 - Rule 62-602.430, F.A.C., “Application Processing for Examinations and License.”
 - Rule 62-602.450, F.A.C., “Notification to Applicants for Examinations.”
 - Rule 62-602.500, F.A.C., “Examination Administration.”
 - Rule 62-602.530, F.A.C., “Conduct at Test Site and During Reviews.”
 - Rule 62-602.550, F.A.C., “Grading of Examinations and Grade Notification.”
 - Rule 62-602.570, F.A.C., “Formal Administrative Hearing Petition and Pre-Hearing Review Request.”
 - Rule 62-602.580, F.A.C., “Use of Operator Examinations.”
 - Rule 62-602.660, F.A.C., “Technical Manuals.”
 - Rule 62-602.700, F.A.C., “Operator Licensing.”
 - Rule 62-602.710, F.A.C., “Renewal of Operator Licenses.”
 - Rule 62-602.720, F.A.C., “Inactive Status of License; Reactivation Procedures.”



PROPOSED RULE CHANGES

- No changes proposed to the following rules, continued:
 - Rule 62-602.750, F.A.C., “Denial of Application or Renewal of Licenses.”
 - Rule 62-602.800, F.A.C., “Grounds for Disciplinary Proceedings.”
 - Rule 62-602.850, F.A.C., “Disciplinary Guidelines.”
 - Rule 62-602.870, F.A.C., “Suspension and Revocation of Operator License.”
- More information on the rulemaking, including public workshop presentations, can be found on DEP’s Division of Water Resource Management Rules in Development webpage below.

<https://FloridaDEP.gov/water/water/content/water-resource-management-rules-development>



RECIPROCITY

Operator Certification Program Updates



RECIPROcity

WHAT IS RECIPROcity?

- A reciprocity license is a license that is recognized by one state as valid in another state, allowing a person to apply for a license in a new state without having to retake all the training courses or exams.

BENEFITS

- Reciprocity licensing is a way to more quickly and efficiently obtain an operator's license.
- It also increases the “portability” of a license.
- NOTE: Each state has its own rules and regulations for reciprocity, so it's important to check the laws of that state before doing business in another state.



RECIPROCITY

STATE-TO-STATE LICENSURE COMPARISON, SECTION 3(1)

- Compare out-of-state licensure requirements to Florida's licensure requirements.
- Subject to DEP approval.
- Other states are different (example: qualifying experience).
- Items considered during review include:
 - Coursework.
 - Education.
 - Training.
 - Exams.
 - Experience.
- Other associated items of consideration include disciplinary actions and license status.



RECIPROCITY

U.S. ARMED FORCES, SECTION 3(2)

- Compare duties of applicants while serving in the in the U.S. Armed Forces to Florida's licensure requirements.
- DEP recognizes the different branches within the U.S. Armed Forces.
 - Subject to DEP approval.
- Items considered during review include the following:
 - Education.
 - Operational experience.
 - Exams.
 - Military Occupational Specialty (MOS).
- Other associated items of consideration include disciplinary actions.
- No fees for military reciprocity applications



RECIPROcity

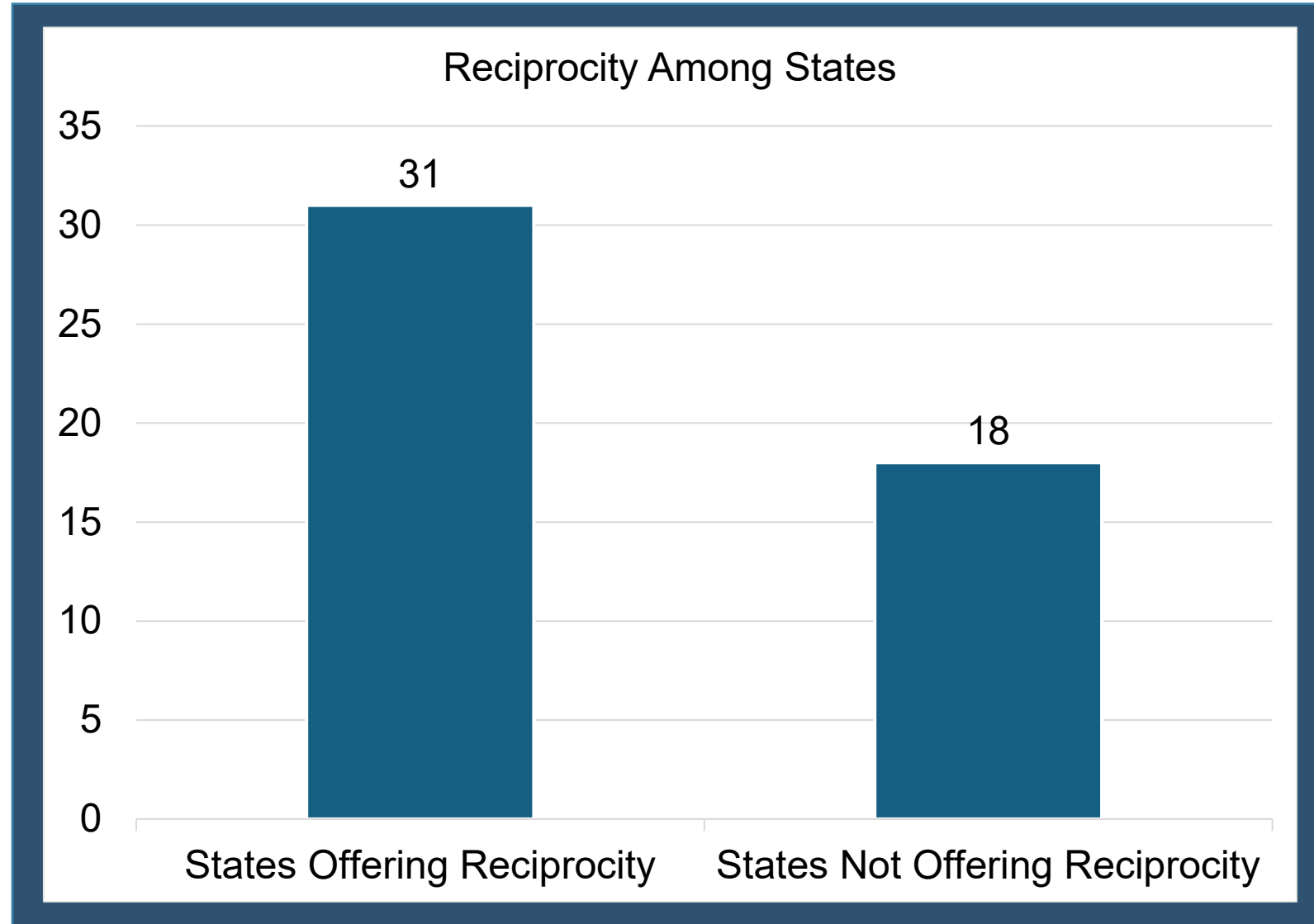
TEMPORARY LICENSES, SECTION 3(3)

- To be issued during a declared state of emergency.
 - Authorization will expire in conjunction with the expiration date noted in the issued Emergency Executive Order (EEO) from the Governor's Office or coincide with the expiration date on the home state license, whichever is sooner.
 - Authorized only in the counties where a state of emergency has been declared by the EEO.
 - Any public water system, wastewater treatment plant or water distribution system who employs persons under this provision shall:
 - Verify the license type and status of the non-Florida operator with the appropriate authority.
 - Enter name, address, phone number, license type, license level and license number in the plant operation and maintenance log in a manner consistent with standard operating practice.
 - Submit notification to OCP within 60 days of the date the employment or utilization of the non-Florida operator.



RECIPROcity

- States offering reciprocity – 31.
- States not offering reciprocity – 18.





ADVANCED TREATMENT WATER FACILITIES

Operator Certification Program Updates



STAFFING AND EXPERIENCE

PROPOSED RULE 62-565.590, F.A.C., “OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE.”

- At an advanced treatment water facility (ATWF) providing minimum tertiary treatment, the **lead** or **chief** operator must be covered by an individual licensed as a class "A" drinking water.
- If providing no more than secondary treatment, the lead or chief shall be covered by the following:
 - A single operator licensed in both class "A" drinking water and wastewater.
 - A combination of operators individually licensed at the class "A" drinking water and wastewater level.
- ATWF shall be staffed 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
 - Lead or chief operator shall be employed full-time five days per week, for a minimum of 35 hours per week, including leave time.



STAFFING AND EXPERIENCE

- Lead or chief shall be available during all periods of ATWF operations.
 - "Available" means able to be contacted as needed to initiate the appropriate actions within 15 minutes.
- ATWF providing minimum tertiary treatment, shall be **staffed** by an individual licensed at a class "B" drinking water level.
- If providing no more than secondary treatment, ATWF shall be staffed by the following:
 - A single operator licensed in both class "B" drinking water and wastewater.
 - A combination of operators individually licensed at the class "B" drinking water and wastewater level.



STAFFING AND EXPERIENCE

- An individual employed in the daily onsite operational control of an ATWF may use this experience to meet the experience requirements of a class A, B or C drinking water or wastewater treatment plant operator license.
- ATWFs that are staffed with both drinking water and wastewater operators.
 - No more than 50% of time and experience shall count towards either drinking water or wastewater treatment plant operator license, unless an alternative staffing has been approved.



STAFFING AND EXPERIENCE

- How can applicants request alternative staffing?
 - Based on treatment technologies being used at the ATWF.
 - Request can be submitted with the engineering report or as a minor permit revision.
 - Shall include a request for an alternative from 50% time and experience constraints.
- When alternative staffing requirements are approved, the percentage of time and experience counting towards either a drinking water or wastewater treatment plant operator license will be based on the approved alternative staffing requirements.



RECAP

Operator Certification Program Updates



RECAP

- DEP's paperless initiative is moving forward.
 - Electronic licensing, processing applications, quicker turnarounds.
- Applicants mailing in paper applications should be using the updated application.
 - Provide proper mailing address and email address.
 - PSI requires an active email address.
- OCP now provides services to OSP.
- CSUS Volume III has replaced "Advanced Waste Treatment."
- Changes to Chapter 62-602, F.A.C.
- Reciprocity is here.



THANK YOU

Chad Hardy, Environmental Administrator
Operator Certification Program
Division of Water Resource Management
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Contact Information:

850-245-7500

Operator.Certification@FloridaDEP.gov