

# A Guide to Washington's Well Operator License Program



## More Information

Visit our [Web site](http://www.ecology.wa.gov): [www.ecology.wa.gov](http://www.ecology.wa.gov)  
 Find the *Well Construction and Licensing* homepage

### Department of Ecology HQ Water Resources

300 Desmond Drive SE  
 PO Box 47600  
 Lacey, WA 98503  
 (360) 407-7122

### Bellingham Field Office

913 Squalicum Way #101  
 Bellingham WA 98225  
 (360) 225-4400

### Shoreline--Northwest Region Office

PO Box 330316  
 Shoreline WA 98133  
 (206) 594-0000

### Lacey--Southwest Region Office

PO Box 47775  
 Lacey WA 98504  
 (360) 407-6300

### Vancouver Field Office

12121 NE 99<sup>th</sup> St, Ste 2100  
 Vancouver WA 98682-2346  
 (360) 690-7171

### Union Gap--Central Region Office

1250 W Alder St.  
 Union Gap, WA 98903  
 (509) 575-2490

### Spokane--Eastern Region Office

4601 N. Monroe  
 Spokane WA 99205  
 (509) 329-3400

## Introduction

Drillers, or well operators, that construct and decommission wells in Washington are required to be licensed with the Department of Ecology. There are two categories of well operator licenses, *water well* and *resource protection well*. This guide provides applicants instruction on qualifying for, obtaining, and renewing these licenses. Under these license categories you may qualify as either a *trainee* or a *full* licensee.

Since 1998 we require continuing education as part of the qualifying experience needed to apply for a well operator license. For more information on Continuing Education, request or view the publication "*Continuing Education for Well Operators*" online.

## Trainee Program Requirements

1. Complete 600 hours of field experience in water or resource protection well drilling. This experience must be gained under the direct supervision of a Washington State licensed well operator. The supervisor must have been licensed for at least three years. Direct supervision means that while this field experience is gained the supervisor must be on-site at all times to supervise the unlicensed employee.
2. Complete 6 continuing education units (CEUs). Visit our website to review approved CEU classes.
3. Obtain a [study packet](#) and publication #98-1808-WR "[On-Site Testing for Licensed Well Operator](#)" online or by contacting our office.
4. Submit a Water Well or Resource Protection Well Operator Trainee License application. This application must be filled out completely, including the "Statement of Work Experience" and "Statement of Sponsor" box. Provide documentation for 6 CEUs and submit a \$75 fee. This package will be mailed to the Ecology address indicated on the form.



5. Pass the written examination. The written examination must be scheduled and may be taken in Lacey, Bellevue, Union Gap, or Spokane.
6. Pass the on-site field examination. The on-site examination will be scheduled after you pass the written examination.

After successfully completing all of the above requirements you will be issued a trainee license.

### **Completing the Trainee Program**

A trainee license is valid for two years. During that time you must keep a daily log of your work that is signed on a daily basis by your supervising licensed operator, or sponsor. In addition to the 600 hours required to obtain your trainee license, you will need to earn 3,600 more hours of field experience which should be recorded in your daily log, and proof of an additional 14 CEUs to complete the Trainee Program. During this time you are allowed to work with indirect supervision by a licensed well operator that has a minimum of three years of experience. The supervisor must be available by radio, cell phone, or other means of communication, and be able to travel to the drill site within one hour.

After you have obtained the additional 3,600 hours of documented experience and 14 CEUs you may apply to be fully licensed by submitting a completed application, \$75 filing fee, daily log, and proof of 14 CEUs. No other examination will be given.

Trainee licenses are not renewable. However, a one-time extension may be granted for up to 24 months. You must provide a reason for the extension and pay a \$75 extension fee. Fourteen CEUs must be earned before the trainee's renewal date to be eligible for an extension.

### **Full Washington Well Operator License**

Experienced drillers have three processes that allow them to become licensed without going through the Trainee Program.

- Working as a licensed driller in another state for three years
- Working as a driller's assistant under an operator licensed in Washington for 5,400 hours
- Relicensing after a license lapses

If you hold a license in another state, can show proof of holding that license for at least three years, and have obtained 32 CEUs, you may apply for a Washington State Well Operator License. All CEUs must have been obtained within the past five years.

## Licensed out of State

- Obtain a study packet by visiting [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) or calling (360) 407-7122.
- Submit a completed application, \$75 filing fee, and proof of out-of-state licensing and 32 CEUs.
- Pass the written examination. After applying, you will receive a letter that tells you if your application has been approved. It will also provide instructions on scheduling the written examination. The exam may be taken in Lacey, Union Gap, Bellevue, or Spokane.
- An on-site examination is required. You will be notified on how to schedule the on-site examination after passing the written examination.

## New Applicant (never been licensed)

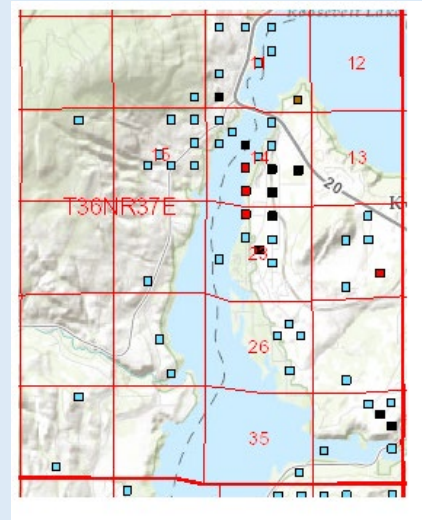
Complete 5,400 hours of drilling experience under the direct supervision of a Washington State licensed operator. Your licensed supervisor must be on site at all times during well construction before you obtain your license. You will need to obtain 32 CEUs. There is a five year time limit for obtaining the CEUs, but no time limit for completing the experience.

- Review a study packet by visiting [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) or calling (360) 407-7122.
- Submit a completed application, \$75 filing fee, and proof of 5,400 hours of supervised drilling experience and 32 CEUs.
- Pass the written examination. The written examination must be scheduled and may be taken in Lacey, Bellevue, Union Gap, or Spokane.

## Expired License

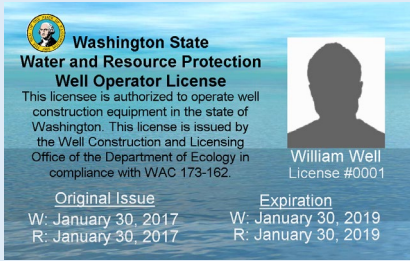
If your license has lapsed you may apply for a new license under this category. You must gain 7 CEUs for every year or portion of a year your license has expired with a maximum requirement of 32 CEUs.

- Obtain a study packet by visiting [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) or calling (360) 407-7122.
- Submit a completed application, \$75 filing fee, and proof of 7 CEUs earned after your renewal date.
- Pass the written examination. The written examination must be scheduled and taken in Lacey, Bellevue, Union Gap, or Spokane.
- If your license has been expired for more than two years you will be required to take an on-site examination.



Well Report Viewer





## Qualifying for Both Water Well and Resource Protection Well Operator's Licenses

If you have either a water or resource protection well license, you may qualify to receive the other license by obtaining an additional 600 hours of well drilling experience while working directly under an operator that possesses the other license.

- Obtain a study packet by visiting [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://www.ecy.wa.gov) or calling (360) 407-7122.
- Submit a completed Well Construction Operator License Application, \$75 fee, and proof of your additional 600 hours of experience. Proof of experience will consist of drilling reports showing you were the driller of record on at least 15 wells, or other documentation approved by Ecology.
- You must pass a written examination. The written examination may be taken in Lacey, Union Gap, or Spokane.

## License Renewal

Licenses are issued for two years and must be renewed before the date of expiration. During those two years, you must obtain 14 CEUs including a two-hour Rules and Regulations class provided by the Department of Ecology. To renew your license Ecology must receive a completed renewal application, associated license fee (\$75 for one license, \$150 for both), and proof of your CEUs.

If you fail to renew your license you may not construct or decommission wells until your license is reinstated. You may reapply under "Expired Licensed Driller" category described above. Ecology will allow a period of one month after you expire to submit your application. CEUs earned after your renewal date will only be counted for relicensing.

To obtain application forms please call (360) 407-7122 or download them from the following links.

### [New Trainee Application Form:](https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/ecy050121b.html)

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/ecy050121b.html>

### [New Full License Application Form:](https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/ecy050121a.html)

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/ecy050121a.html>

### [Renewal Application Form:](https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/ecy050122.html)

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/summarypages/ecy050122.html>

## Special accommodations

To request ADA accommodation, call Ecology at 360-407-6872, 711 (relay service), or 877-833-6341 TTY).