

# WTS Occupational License Information

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## Water Treatment Specialist Certification Program

The Water Treatment Specialist Certification Program was developed in order to regulate individuals working in the water treatment business who are not licensed under the Plumbing License Law. The requirements for this program are outlined in the [Texas Occupations Code Chapter 1904](#). The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is the current regulatory agency for Water Treatment Specialists.

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING DIVISION

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This program establishes provisions for an occupational license to “certify persons qualified to install, exchange, service, and repair residential, commercial, or industrial water treatment equipment and appliances”. The major objective of this program is to “ensure the public health and to protect the public from unqualified persons engaging in activities relating to water treatment”. Therefore, it is illegal for a person to engage in water treatment or represent that they can perform the actions of a Water Treatment Specialist (WTS) unless that person possesses either a Water Treatment Specialist license or is licensed under the Plumbing License Law. Other exemptions from this license are:

- Employees of industrial facilities who install or service water treatment equipment at their facilities
- Employees of public water systems installing water treatment equipment at their system who hold a Class C license or higher
- Employees of registered operations companies installing water treatment equipment at the facilities for which the operations company has a contract to operate and who hold a Class C license or higher

The Texas Legislature has defined water treatment as “a business conducted under contract that requires experience in the analysis of water, including the ability to determine how to treat influent and effluent water, to alter or purify water, and to add or remove a mineral, chemical, or bacterial content or substance. The term also includes the installation and service of potable water treatment equipment in public or private water systems and making connections necessary to complete installation of a water treatment system”.

## Classes of WTS Licenses

TCEQ has developed three different classes of licenses each with specific standards for qualifications, certification fees, and a set duration of validity. Approved work experience includes installation and/or servicing water treatment appliances that is performed under a licensed individual.

License	Education	Work Experience	Required Training
<b>Class 1</b>	None	None	None
<b>Class 2</b>	< H.S. Diploma or GED H.S. Diploma or GED 1 Year College	3 Years 2 Years 1 Year	Basic Water Conditioning
<b>Class 3</b>	H.S. Diploma or GED 2 Years College College Degree	3 Years 2 Years 1 Year	Basic and Advanced Water Conditioning

### Class 1 License

Individuals who have been issued this license must work under the supervision of an individual holding a higher-class license, a local plumbing inspector, or a health official that has jurisdiction where the work is performed. Work is restricted to the following activities:

- exchange and regeneration of portable tanks;
- regeneration of nonportable tanks; or
- other tasks which may be assigned by the supervisor and for which direct supervision is provided

This license does not require any minimum education or work experience. There are also no training classes required. An exam administered by TCEQ must be passed before receiving this license.

### Class 2 License

Individuals who have been issued this license have demonstrated a practical working knowledge of the mechanics and servicing principles of water conditioners. They have been deemed able to perform water treatment installations, exchanges, services, or repairs of equipment. Individuals are considered to be aware of the public health requirements connected with their activities.

License holders are excluded from working on reverse osmosis and deionization equipment unless the work is performed under the supervision of an individual holding a higher-class license.

This license does require specific minimum education and work experience requirements that must be met to qualify. If The applicant does not possess a High School Diploma or GED, they must have at least three years of work experience. If the applicant possesses only a High School Diploma or GED, they must have at least two years of work experience. If the applicant has completed one year of college, they must have at least one year of work experience. The Basic Water Conditioning course must be completed before application approval. An exam administered by TCEQ must be passed before receiving this license.

## Class 3 License

Individuals who have been issued this license meet minimum standards of qualifications established for the installation, exchange, servicing, and repair of water treatment equipment and appliances, including reverse osmosis and deionization equipment.

This license does require specific minimum education and work experience requirements that must be met to qualify. If the applicant possesses only a High School Diploma or GED, they must have at least three years of work experience. If the applicant has completed two years of college, they must have at least two years of work experience. If the applicant possesses a college degree, they must have at least one year of work experience. Both the Basic Water Conditioning and Advanced Water Conditioning courses must be completed before application approval. An exam administered by TCEQ must be passed before receiving this license.

## Application

Before you can register for an exam, an application, fee and required documents must be submitted, reviewed and approved. If TCEQ approves your application, you will receive an approval letter. The application must be completed online from the TCEQ website. During the completion of this online application a \$111 fee will be collected.

A conditional application approval is an option for individuals who are only missing the required core training, have no deficiencies, and intend to take the exam immediately following the required training at a location where the TCEQ is proctoring the exams.

Allow approximately 3-4 weeks from date of receipt for TCEQ to review your electronic application. If approved, you will receive an approval letter by mail and instructions on how to register for the exam.

Under special circumstances (for instance, state agencies who must use a Purchase Order to pay for the application fee, which are not accepted in ePay), a paper application can be submitted in place of an electronic application. Processing of paper applications take approximately 4-6 weeks if they are administratively complete and no deficiencies are found.

The application becomes void either after one year from the date of application or after the fourth unsuccessful attempt of the same exam, whichever occurs first. If an application becomes void (or expires) before you can take the same exam again, you will be required to submit a new application and fee.

All statements, qualifications, and attachments provided by the applicant that relate to an application shall be true, accurate, complete, and contain no misrepresentation or falsification. Violations may result in deficiency or denial.

## Deficiencies and Denials

If a deficiency is found in the application packet, you will receive a deficiency letter and will have 120 days to clear the deficiency(s). If the deficiency is not cleared within 120 days, your application will expire and you will be required to submit a new application and fee to reapply for the license. Application fees are not refundable.

Individuals who have defaulted on a student loan, are late with child support payments, do not meet minimum license requirements or have delinquent fees or penalties with the TCEQ, may be denied a license.

## Criminal History

There is a potential ineligibility of an individual who has been convicted of an offense to be issued an occupational license by the TCEQ upon completion of this course. The current TCEQ Criminal Conviction Guidelines for Occupational Licensing TCEQ can:

- After notice and hearing, deny, suspend or revoke a license on the grounds that the individual has been convicted of an offense, other than a Class C misdemeanor that:
  - Directly relates to the duties and responsibilities of the licensed occupation
  - Does not directly relate to the duties and responsibilities of the licensed occupation and that was committed less than five years before the date the individual applies for the license
  - Is listed in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure
  - Is a sexually violent offense, as defined by Texas Code of Criminal Procedure

The commission shall revoke the license or registration upon an individual's imprisonment following a felony conviction, felony community supervision revocation, revocation of parole or revocation of mandatory supervision.

Applicants have the right to request a criminal history evaluation from the TCEQ under Texas Occupations Code Section 53.102. The TCEQ may consider an individual to have been convicted of an offense for the purpose of denying, suspending or revoking a license under circumstances described in Title 30 Texas Administrative Code Section 30.33.

## Exam

A minimum passing score of 70% must be achieved on a TCEQ licensing exam before a valid license can be issued. These exams cover laws, job duties, standards, and technical and chemical processes related to water treatment. Exams can either be paper or computer based.

Computer-Based Testing offers many benefits. There numerous approved locations that offer expanded access for convenience in scheduling your exam. Upon completion of the exam, you are provided with your score and printed exam analysis feedback. Licenses are issued within one week of a passed exam. Each location may have different rules for retesting, but TCEQ approves immediate retesting. A list of approved locations is available via the TCEQ website. Pre-registration is required for most locations.

Paper-Based Testing is available at TCEQ regional offices. Pre-registration is required to sit for an exam, walk-ins are not allowed. Grading of the exam and issue of license takes much longer than Computer-Based Testing.

## License Renewal

It is your responsibility to renew your license on time. Licenses are valid for three years and must be renewed with the TCEQ. Renewal applicants must have completed the required Continuing Education (CE) requirements, submit a renewal application and a criminal history attestation, and pay the renewal fee. The fee to renew each license is \$111. Licenses are not eligible for renewal if:

- The license has been expired over 30 days
- The license will not expire within 90 days of application
- The license has been revoked or replaced by a higher-class license

A new license must be obtained by submitting a new application, fee and passing the licensing exam again.

## Continuing Education

All classes of Water treatment Specialist Licenses require 12 hours of approved continuing education within the valid license period. In addition to the Basic and Advanced Water Conditioning courses, there are a number of approved training classes listed on the TCEQ website.

## Violations

TCEQ has the authority to enforce laws and regulation connected to water treatment. Violations can lead to warning, citations, license suspension or license revocation.

## Warning Letters

If an individual causes, contributes to, or allows a violation of licensing law provisions, TCEQ may issue a **warning letter**. The letter shall be placed in the individual's permanent file maintained by the executive director. This letter shall be a warning that further violations or offenses by the individual may be grounds for suspension, revocation, enforcement action, or some combination. A warning is not a prerequisite for initiation of suspension, revocation, or enforcement proceedings.

## Field Citations

The field citation program is intended to promote a quick resolution for any of the field citation-eligible violations documented during a TCEQ investigation, while offering a reduced penalty as compared to a penalty calculated through the traditional enforcement process. The program includes only violations that were determined by the commission to be “clear cut” and able to be easily corrected to help make the enforcement process more efficient for both the TCEQ and the regulated entity involved.

The TCEQ conducted an investigation at your facility. The investigator cited one or more violations on an official TCEQ Field Citation form. An individual who has received a Field Citation has two basic options:

*Option A* Settle the Field Citation. In this case, you will pay the assessed penalty amount within 30 days and correct the violation(s) within 45 days from the date of the investigation

*Option B* Decline the Field Citation. If you choose to decline the field citation: the violations in your Field Citation will be referred to the TCEQ’s Enforcement Division. Please be aware that the reduced-penalty opportunity is withdrawn during this process. You will retain your opportunity to request an evidentiary hearing through the State Office of Administrative Hearings.

## License Suspension & Revocation

After notice and hearing, TCEQ may suspend or revoke a license on any of the grounds contained in the Texas Water Code. The commission may also suspend or revoke a license if license holder is identified by the Office of Attorney General as being delinquent on child support payments.

Suspension may be for a period of up to one year, depending upon the seriousness of the violations. A license shall be revoked upon a second suspension. TCEQ may revoke a license, for a designated term or permanently. If a license or registration is revoked a second time, the revocation shall be permanent.

## Encountering Unlicensed Individuals

In rural Texas, licensed WTS often find unlicensed individuals doing water treatment work under contract for private well owners. These unlicensed operators put public health and safety at risk as they are often untrained in the analysis of water and almost always without knowledge of water chemistry critical to recommending the proper treatment equipment for well owners.

In addition to TCEQ, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (“TDLR”) will help enforce licensing laws that affect the public and health and safety of the state’s water supplies. If you suspect an unlicensed person doing or advertising services requiring a license, TCEQ and TDLR will investigate your complaint requiring only that you file a complaint on a copy of the form shown on the next page. The complainant can choose to be anonymous or identified.

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATION**[www.tdlr.texas.gov](http://www.tdlr.texas.gov)**COMPLAINT FORM**

<b>Mail To:</b> <b>TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND REGULATION</b> <b>ENFORCEMENT DIVISION</b> <b>P.O. BOX 12157 •AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711 (800)</b> <b>803-9202 ( •512) 539-5600</b> <b>FAX 512-539-5698</b> <b><a href="mailto:enforcement@tdlr.texas.gov">enforcement@tdlr.texas.gov</a></b>	Date Received: (For Department Use Only)
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**Notice**

Under the Texas Public Information Act, the complainant's identity is not confidential. In the event your complaint is opened for investigation, enforcement procedures require a copy of the complaint and all associated documentation be forwarded to the Respondent including your name and contact information.

**A. You, as the complaining party:** *(If you wish to file your complaint anonymously to ensure your identity is not revealed, you must leave this section blank. If you file your complaint anonymously you will not receive case status updates.)*

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Work Phone:

Home Phone:

Fax:

E-Mail:

*Contact from the Department will be via e-mail if you provide an e-mail address*

**B. Would you be willing to testify if this case goes to a hearing?** Yes  No

**C. The person, firm, building or facility you are complaining about (Respondent):**

Name:

Company or Facility Name:

Physical Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Mailing Address (if different than above):

City:

State:

Zip:

Telephone numbers:

Office -

Fax-

E-mail:

License or Registration Number:

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