
*A practical, sensible way to
protect consumers and
promote public policy...*

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- **List of Certified Personnel:**
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- **About California's C-55 License:**
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– **and Study Guide:**
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- **About TCEQ Operator certification:**
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For more information contact:



International Headquarters and Laboratory

4151 Naperville Road
Lisle, IL 60532-3696 USA
Phone: 630 505 0160
Fax: 630 505 9637
Web site: www.wqa.org

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Specialty License

Water Treatment Industry Toolkit



*Courtesy of The Water Quality Association
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Protecting Consumers

Emerging contaminants, pharmaceuticals, scarcity, and salinity warnings, and more: Reports increasingly show new potential dangers surrounding our drinking water.

That's why it is more important than ever for consumers to have confidence that the treatment products they buy are appropriate for their needs, respectful to the environment, properly installed, and effectively maintained.

Fortunately, there is a solution – a practical, sensible way to protect consumers and promote public policy. That solution is specialty licensing for point-of-use/point-of-entry (POU/POE) water treatment professionals.

Complex equipment

Each community and even each household faces different potential concerns. And water treatment equipment is often complex and specialized.

Plumbers are experts in their field – the law requires this in most states. But in many cases, plumbers are not trained to specify or maintain water treatment devices.

But, there are professionals educated to do just this. With state licensing for point-of-use/point-of-entry water treatment equipment dealers, homeowners are able to call on proficient and certified experts and, incidentally, to avoid unnecessary costs when a licensed plumber is not required.

Current law and code

The plumbing code focuses on protecting potable water – for example, use of proper plumbing materials, protecting against backflow, and avoiding dangerous cross connections. Water treatment professionals have a similar but different focus. Their goal is making sure water in private residences meets USEPA & local requirements for health and safety.

Cost and effectiveness

Often consumers turn to plumbers for water quality issues, which can be an expensive option. What's more, under current law in many states, water treatment businesses are often required to retain the services of a plumber for labor that their own service personnel are trained to perform. This means passing on costs to the consumer.

Specialty License

Choosing a plumber may not be the best option. We don't call on even the best podiatrist to work on a broken wrist. A WQA-certified water treatment professional has been trained where to look and what to recommend.

Before any treatment decision can be made, water needs to be tested, and that analysis needs to be properly understood for the right treatment system to be recommended. System troubleshooting also requires testing the raw water source and various pieces of treatment equipment to determine what is causing the problem. Plumbers are regularly not trained in collecting water samples or onsite water analysis, but water treatment professionals perform such actions for every system they sell or service.

WQA-certified water treatment professionals have continuing education credit requirements that help them keep themselves and their staffs abreast of innovations in treatment technologies. This means making sure homeowners are getting the devices that are best for them, and it also means water and energy savings for consumers. With the right system, consumers protect themselves, while also finding the most efficient and up-to-date products available. Many plumbers would not be expected to know of such advances.

Licensing options

There are numerous ways to implement a specialty license for water treatment systems. Take the Texas approach. Overseen by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, licenses are designed to ensure an understanding of USEPA drinking water standards, and water testing procedures are similar to the type of education that is required for small public water system operators. Licenses require continuing education. The state gives continuing education credit for the technical courses at the annual convention of the Water Quality Association and the Texas WQA convention.

Water Quality Association

WQA can be a resource for state licensing, as in the example of California's C-55 license that employs WQA's textbooks as study materials. States may even wish to require WQA certification and training programs as a condition for a license.

WQA has been providing testing and certification since 1977. The program employs guidelines recommended by the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE, formerly NOCA), which is one of the nation's certifier of certifiers. The program's primary examinations also

have been sent for careful psychometric review to ensure they provide an unbiased and valid measurement of knowledge and abilities. Certified professionals receive training in:

- Basic chemistry
- Water contaminants and their chemistry
- Theory of treatment technologies
- Application of correct treatment technologies for specific contaminants
- Installation, maintenance and troubleshooting
- Water pressure/demand considerations/calculations, including fixture counts and pressure loss in pipe
- General plumbing code requirements – based on CABO, UPC, IPC
- Pipe cutting, pipe joining, supports, plumbing valves
- Basic electricity
- Safety
- Business ethics

All certification titles require continuing education credits for recertification. The CWS/CCO certification requires 30 hours every three years, and CI/CSR requires 20 hours every three years. All continuing education credit is tracked through a computerized database.

By licensing water treatment professionals according to well-established and independent standards, policymakers can help empower and protect consumers.

More about The Water Quality Association

WQA is a not-for-profit international trade organization representing the residential, commercial, and industrial water treatment industry. Its membership consists of both manufacturers and dealers/distributors of equipment. WQA is a resource and information source, a voice for the industry, an educator of professionals, a laboratory for product testing, and a communicator with the public. To learn more about WQA and its professional certification programs, visit wqa.org

The Water Quality Association Water Treatment Industry Toolkit

The Water Quality Association provides these fact sheets and resource guides as a service to its members, policymakers, and the general public. They are designed to promote discussion on key issues through facts and data.