



October 1, 2020

Dear Waterworks and Waste Systems Operators:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Board of Waterworks and Waste Systems Operators (the Board) appreciate the contribution of water and wastewater operators for providing uninterrupted services for Maryland citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. As an essential workforce, operators have tirelessly worked during these trying times.

As a result of the pandemic, on March 16, 2020, MDE and the Board in accordance with the governor's executive order dated March 12, 2020, immediately postponed or cancelled all previously scheduled training and examination opportunities required for operators' certification renewal. Therefore, by no fault of their own, many operators have since experienced prolonged delays in their renewal process. Operators and employers understandably have concerns about the impact this delay has upon employment status at water and wastewater facilities. The purpose of this letter is to clarify for operators and utilities of the requirements for operators' certification renewal during this unprecedented time.

Governor Hogan issued the [Executive Order To Extend Certain Licenses and Other Governmental Authorizations](#) on March 12, 2020, which administratively extends operators' certificates until 30 days after the state of emergency is terminated and the catastrophic health emergency is rescinded. On June 19, 2020, Governor Hogan issued an Order amending and restating the Order of March 12, 2020. This letter outlines the impact the June 19, 2020 Order may have on your certification renewal.

1. The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 26.06.01.12(C) affords an operator with an expired certificate a 90-day late renewal grace period to complete the necessary renewal process. After the 90-day grace period, the expired certificate enters a reinstatement period for the remaining two years. Beyond the two-year period, an expired certificate is permanently expired and cannot be reinstated.
2. Pursuant to the June 19, 2020 Order, for certificates which expire during the state of emergency period, the 90-day late renewal grace period begins to run at the time of the certificate's expiration and remains in effect until 30 days after termination of the state of emergency. No other additional time is afforded after termination of the Executive Order. This scenario impacts all certificates that expire on or after April 1, 2020 and until such time as the state of emergency is terminated.
3. Certificates which expired prior to the issuance of the Executive Order and were within the 90-day grace period as of March 12, 2020, remain covered under the 90-day late renewal grace period until 30 days after termination of the state of emergency. No other additional time is afforded after the termination of the state of emergency. This scenario impacts all certifications that expired on January 1, 2020 thru and including March 1, 2020.
4. All certificates expired on or before December 1, 2019, are not covered by the Executive Order.

### **DURATION OF ALL CERTIFICATES**

Except as noted in the Governor's order and Per COMAR 26.06.01.08 (C). A certificate is invalid after the expiration date of the current certificate if not renewed in accordance with the requirements of regulation .12 of this chapter.

### **IMPACTS UPON TRAINING AND EXAMS**

For those certificates impacted by the Executive Order, operators have until 30 days after the state of emergency is lifted to submit their renewal applications and fee, and to complete and submit proof of required training. In addition, Operators in Training (OIT) have until 30 days after the state of emergency is lifted to complete their examination requirement for renewal.

Information pertaining to training and exams can be found on the Board's web page at <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Permits/EnvironmentalBoards/Pages/BWW.aspx>. Please refer to the page regularly for updated announcements.

### **LATE FEES**

As operators are afforded until 30 days after the state of emergency is terminated to complete their training requirements and submit their renewal applications, late/renewal fees will not be due until 30 days after the state of emergency is terminated. Per COMAR 26.06.01.07-.09 the Board does not have legal authority to waive late fees, and **the Board will resume issuing late fees for all late renewals beginning 30 days after the state of emergency is terminated:**

1. Certificates with an expiration date within the normal 90-day grace period will incur the \$100 late fee.
2. Certificates with an expiration date past the normal 90-day grace period will incur the \$150 reinstatement fee.

### **FINAL NOTE**

Operators are encouraged to submit renewal applications, renewal fee, proof of completed training and to meet OIT examination requirements as soon as possible to minimize incurring a late or reinstatement fee as the Board continues to process these applications in a timely manner. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation during these challenging times. Please contact the Board of Waterworks and Waste Systems Operators at [wwso.board@maryland.gov](mailto:wwso.board@maryland.gov) or the Maryland Department of the Environment Water Supply Program at [water.supply@maryland.gov](mailto:water.supply@maryland.gov) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "saeid kasraei". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.

Saeid Kasraei  
Administrator  
Water Supply Program