



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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June 29, 2026

Ms. Angela Cappetti
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Philadelphia, PA 19103-2852

Dear Ms. Cappetti:

In compliance with the requirement for states to meet the Certification and Recertification of Operators of Community and Nontransient Noncommunity Public Water Systems (February 5, 1999). Enclosed please find the completed Annual Operator Certification Report for the Commonwealth of Virginia for the reporting period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (540) 460-9348, or at Julie.floyd@vdh.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie M. Floyd".

Julie M. Floyd
Operator Certification and Training Manager

Cc: Dwayne Roadcap, Director – Office of Drinking Water
Jarrett Talley, Division Director - Training, Capacity Development and Outreach
William Richardson, USEPA Region 3, Section Chief

Enclosure

Commonwealth of Virginia Operator Certification Annual Report



Reporting Period July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

2026

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Abigail Spanberger, Governor

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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OFFICE OF DRINKING WATER

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Submit questions or comments to

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This report is available to the public on the VDH Office of Drinking Water website
at:

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/drinking-water/information-for-waterworks-operators>

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Appendix A - Annual Operator Certification / Capacity Development Stakeholders Meeting
Attachment 1: Virginia Register Information

Attachment 2: 18VAC16-30 Final Regulation Effective January 16, 2026: Board for Water
and Wastewater Works Operators and Onsite Sewage Professionals- Licensing regulation
amendments.

Annual Operator Certification Report for Virginia

Executive Summary

The Virginia Operator Certification Program (OpCert) remains a robust, effective program. No backsliding has occurred since the last report. All public health objectives are met by Virginia's Operator Certification Program. The Program ensures, through the licensure and regulatory processes, that public water system operators are trained and certified and that they have knowledge and understanding of the public health reasons for Federal and State drinking water standards. The Program is a key part of the overall State approach to regulating public waterworks to ensure that customers of any public water system are provided with an adequate supply of safe, potable drinking water and are confident that their water is safe to drink.

During the reporting period and effective January 2026, the Board for Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operators and Onsite Sewage System Professionals completed a comprehensive review and update of its regulations. The amendments modernized licensure requirements, reduced unnecessary regulatory burdens, improved administrative efficiency, clarified existing requirements, incorporated longstanding board guidance into regulation, and enhanced protections for public health, safety, and welfare. A summary of changes is found in Section 1: Authority and incorporated in relevant sections throughout this Report. A full copy of the updated regulations is provided in Attachment 2 and is available online at: [Vol. 42 Iss. 8 \(Final\) 18VAC160-30, Waterworks And Wastewater Works Operators Licensing Regulations December 01, 2025](#)

In accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publication of the *Federal Operator Certification Guidelines*, in Virginia, there are 1560 community and non-transient noncommunity waterworks required to have licensed operators. The compliance rate (percentage of waterworks with a properly licensed operator) is over 99 percent.

The Virginia Department of Health – Office of Drinking Water (VDH – ODW) funds many training opportunities for waterworks operators through the EPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) set-asides. In consultation with VDH, training partners design and deploy the courses to assist operators in gaining new and improved skills as well as a better understanding of their industry. Many of these courses provide continuing education unit (CEU) credits which can be counted towards experience when obtaining an operators' license, as well as for license renewal. Through strategic use of the set-aside funds, VDH continues to actively support low-cost training offered across the state to meet the need for high-quality, affordable water operator training.

As of May 29, 2026, there were a total of 2,283 licensed waterworks operators in the Commonwealth of Virginia across six classifications. This represents an increase of 185 operators, or of 8.8%, since May 22, 2025. This represents an overall increase of 374 operators since 2023. The Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) is the state agency that oversees waterworks licensure. Water Operator licenses renew on odd-numbered years, with all licenses requiring renewal no later than February 28, 2027.

DPOR has the power to discipline and fine any licensee and to suspend or revoke or refuse to renew or reinstate any license. The agency also has the authority to deny any application for a license.

Purpose

This annual report provides detailed information on Operator Certification in Virginia. It addresses the nine guidelines of the Federal *Final Guidelines for Certification and Recertification of the Operators of Community (CWS) and Nontransient Noncommunity (NTNC) Public Water Systems*.

The document is organized in accordance with Federal Operator Certification Guidelines; the October 15, 2001, Office of Water memorandum “*Annual Submittal for State Operator Certification Programs*,” and “*Recommended Operator Certification Annual Submittal Reporting Requirements*” provided by EPA. This report covers the nine baseline standards in the order published in the *Federal Register*.

Background

VDH – ODW is the primacy agency that regulates waterworks in Virginia by means of the Virginia *Waterworks Regulations*. The water operator’s licensure program is administered by DPOR, not the drinking water primacy agency. Since operation of a waterworks is in the interest of public health and safety, operator licensure is required for all operators of community and nontransient noncommunity waterworks.

Within DPOR, the Board for Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operators and Onsite Sewage System Professionals (Licensing Board) is the regulatory board and governing body. *Code of Virginia* Title 54.1, Chapter 23, authorizes the Licensing Board to regulate waterworks operator licensure under its *Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operators Licensing Regulations*.

The Licensure Board provides for the testing of operators and issues licenses. Licenses issued are specific to operator classifications which attest to the competency of an operator to supervise and operate specific classes of waterworks while protecting public health, safety, and welfare, and conserving and protecting the water resources of the Commonwealth. The Licensure Board is comprised of eleven stakeholder members as follows: (Code of Virginia § 54.1-2301.A)

- the Director of the Office of Drinking Water of the Virginia Department of Health, or his designee,
- the Executive Director of the Virginia Water Control Board, or his designee,
- a currently employed waterworks operator having a valid license of the highest classification (Class 1) issued by the Board,
- a currently employed wastewater works operator having a valid license of the highest classification (Class 1) issued by the Board,
- a local or regional representative of the Department of Health,
- a representative of an owner of a waterworks,
- a representative of an owner of a wastewater works,
- a licensed alternative on-site sewage system operator,
- a licensed alternative on-site sewage system installer,
- a licensed on-site soil evaluator,
- and one non-legislative citizen member.

The alternative on-site sewage system operator, alternative on-site sewage system installer, and on-site soil evaluator have practiced for at least five consecutive years immediately prior to appointment. No

owner can be represented on the Board by more than one representative or employee operator. The term of Board members is four years.

Operator Certification Annual Report

1.0 Authorization

The Board for Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operators and Onsite Sewage System Professionals completed a comprehensive review and update of its regulations. The amendments modernized licensure requirements, reduced unnecessary regulatory burdens, improved administrative efficiency, clarified existing requirements, incorporated longstanding board guidance into regulation, and enhanced protections for public health, safety, and welfare.

Key regulatory updates included:

Licensing and Examination Requirements

- Increased the period applicants have to take an approved examination from 12 months to 24 months after application approval.
- Established a 10-year validity period for passing examination scores.
- Clarified qualification and experience requirements for licensure.
- Reduced certain education and experience requirements for waterworks and wastewater works operator licenses while maintaining competency standards.
- Expanded pathways for applicants to qualify through education and experience substitutions.
- Clarified qualifying experience requirements for provisional operators and operators-in-training.

Application and Administrative Requirements

- Added and revised definitions to improve regulatory clarity and consistency.
- Removed obsolete, redundant, and unnecessary regulatory provisions.
- Clarified reporting requirements related to criminal convictions, disciplinary actions, and compliance with standards of conduct.
- Extended the reinstatement period for expired licenses from one year to 24 months.
- Updated renewal notification procedures to allow electronic communication.

Continuing Professional Education

- Reduced continuing professional education (CPE) requirements for certain operator classifications.
- Increased the amount of CPE credit available for developing or substantially updating training courses.
- Clarified provisions regarding extensions of time to complete CPE requirements.
- Updated training subject matter requirements to reflect evolving operational and technological practices.

Training Provider Requirements

- Significantly reorganized and modernized regulations governing board-approved training programs.
- Established new requirements regarding training provider records, participant certificates of completion, audits, reporting obligations, and approval standards.
- Clarified how training may be used as a substitute for experience requirements.

- Reduced unnecessary administrative burdens on training providers while improving accountability and record retention requirements.

Standards of Conduct and Professional Practice

- Clarified prohibited acts, standards of practice, and reporting obligations.
- Updated provisions related to disciplinary actions and criminal convictions.
- Clarified conflict-of-interest provisions and disclosure requirements.
- Streamlined and clarified scope-of-practice requirements for waterworks and wastewater works operators.

Impact

The regulatory amendments improve the Board's ability to administer its licensing programs while maintaining public health, safety, and environmental protections. The changes provide clearer regulatory requirements, reduce unnecessary burdens on applicants, licensees, and training providers, and expand pathways to licensure to help address workforce needs within the regulated professions.

General information about Virginia's regulatory process for submittal and approval of updates to Regulations, including public participation, is available as Attachment 1 and is also available online at [Register Information Page, Vol. 42 Iss. 8 Dec 01, 2025](#).

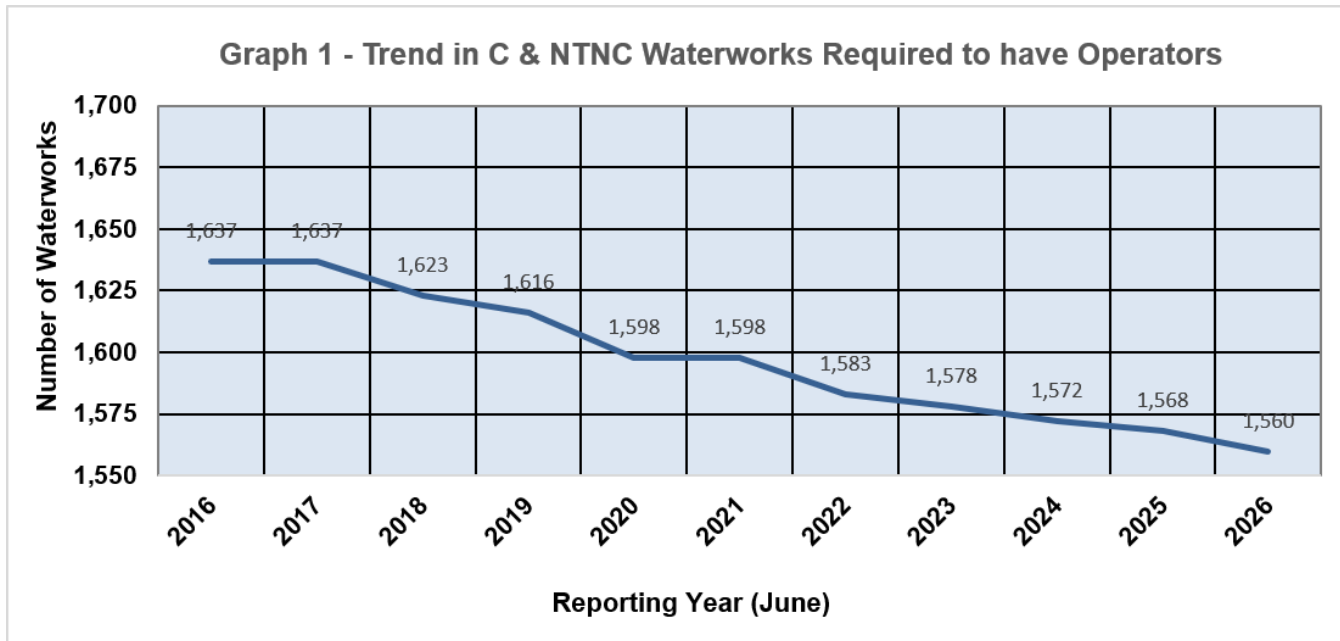
A full copy of the updated regulations is provided in Attachment 2 and is available online at: [Vol. 42 Iss. 8 \(Final\) 18VAC160-30, Waterworks And Wastewater Works Operators Licensing Regulations December 01, 2025](#)

2.0 Classification of Systems, Facilities, and Operators

In Virginia, VDH-ODW classifies community and Nontransient Noncommunity (NTNC) waterworks by the potential health risks based on size, population served, source, and complexity. This is incorporated into the Virginia Administrative Code 12VAC5-590-461. There are six classifications from the lowest, Class 6, to the highest, Class 1.

2.1 Classification of Systems

As of June 16, 2026, the total number of Community (1062) and NTNC waterworks (498) in Virginia required to have a licensed operator was 1,560. This represents a net decrease of eight waterworks since the last report. This decline represents small waterworks consolidating with larger waterworks.



2.2 Classification of Facilities

Regulated waterworks in Virginia are classified based on the number of people served by the system, the complexity of the system including storage and distribution system, and the complexity of treatment provided. They are identified as Class 6 (smallest, least complex) to Class 1 (largest, most complex) facilities.

2.2.1 Class 6 Waterworks

A Class 6 waterworks licensee may operate any waterworks as follows:

- a waterworks serving fewer than 400 persons which (i) provides no treatment or (ii) employs one or more of the following treatment processes: hypochlorination for disinfection; corrosion control with calcite or magnesium oxide contactors or solution feed except with caustic soda; or sequestration by solution feed.
- a waterworks classified by VDH-ODW as a Class 6 waterworks.

As of June 16, 2026, Virginia has 864 Class 6 waterworks; a decrease of ten from last year's report.

2.2.2 Class 5 Waterworks

A Class 5 waterworks licensee may operate any waterworks as follows:

- A waterworks serving 400 or more persons which (i) provides no treatment or (ii) employs one or more of the following treatment processes: hypochlorination for disinfection; corrosion control with calcite or magnesium oxide contactors or solution feed except with caustic soda; or sequestration by solution feed.
- A waterworks classified by VDH-ODW as either a Class 5 or Class 6 waterworks. The Class 5 also serves as the distribution system classification.

As of June 16, 2026, Virginia had 277 Class 5 waterworks; reflecting an increase of one from last year's report.

2.2.3 Class 4 Waterworks

A Class 4 waterworks licensee may operate any waterworks as follows:

- A waterworks or water treatment plant serving fewer than 5,000 persons or having a water treatment plant capacity of less than 0.5 million gallons per day (MGD), and employing one or more of the following: disinfection other than with hypochlorination, caustic soda feed, iron and manganese removal, ion exchange, slow sand filtration, aeration, rechlorination other than with hypochlorination, activated carbon contactors, membrane or other filtration technologies without chemical coagulation, and fluoridation with a saturator; or
- A waterworks classified by the VDH-ODW as either a Class 4, 5, or 6 waterworks.

As of June 16, 2026, Virginia has 262 Class 4 waterworks; a decrease of one from last year's report.

2.2.4 Class 3 Waterworks

A Class 3 waterworks licensee may operate any waterworks as follows:

- A waterworks or a water treatment plant serving fewer than 5,000 persons or having a water treatment plant capacity less than 0.5 MGD, whichever is greater, and employing conventional filtration or chemical coagulation in combination with membrane filtration;
- A waterworks or a water treatment plant serving 5,000 or more persons or having a water treatment plant capacity of 0.5 MGD or more, whichever is greater, and employing one or more of the following: disinfection other than with hypochlorination, caustic soda feed, iron and manganese removal, ion exchange, slow sand filtration, aeration, rechlorination other than with hypochlorination, activated carbon contactors, membrane or other filtration technologies without chemical coagulation, and fluoridation with a saturator or acid feed;
- A waterworks or a water treatment plant employing fluoridation with other than a saturator not considered a Class 1 or Class 2 waterworks; or
- A waterworks classified by VDH-ODW as either a Class 3, 4, 5 or 6 waterworks.

As of June 16, 2026, Virginia had 44 Class 3 waterworks; reflecting an increase of two from last year's report.

2.2.5 Class 2 Waterworks

A Class 2 waterworks licensee may operate any waterworks as follows:

- A waterworks or a water treatment plant serving 5,000 or more persons but fewer than 50,000 persons or having a water treatment plant capacity of 0.5 MGD or more but less than 5.0 MGD, whichever range applies, and employing rapid rate conventional filtration (see [12VAC5-590-874](#)) or chemical coagulation in combination with membrane filtration;
- A waterworks or a water treatment plant serving fewer than 50,000 persons or having a water treatment plant capacity of less than 5.0 MGD and employing high rate conventional filtration (see [12VAC5-590-874](#)); or
- A waterworks classified by the VDH-ODW as either a Class 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 waterworks.

As of June 16, 2026, Virginia had 75 Class 2 waterworks; a decrease of two from last year's report.

2.2.6 Class 1 Waterworks

A Class 1 waterworks licensee may operate any waterworks.

- A waterworks or a water treatment plant serving 50,000 or more persons, or having a water treatment plant capacity of 5.0 MGD or more and employing conventional filtration or chemical coagulation in combination with membrane filtration; or
- A waterworks classified by the VDH-ODW as either a Class 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 waterworks.

As of June 16, 2026, Virginia had 38 Class 1 waterworks; an increase of two from last year's report.

2.3 Classification of Operators

Water operator licenses in Virginia mirror the facility classifications described in the previous sections. A Class 6 Water Operator operates smaller, less complex water facilities than an operator holding the highest license in Virginia, the Class 1 Waterworks Operator License. Details about the requirements for obtaining the licenses are provided in Section 3.

The total number of licensed waterworks operators in Virginia is 2,283 (Table 1). This reporting period saw an increase of 8.8% or 185 operators since May 22, 2025. This represents an overall increase of 374 operators since 2023. This increase is encouraging and may be in response to additional support for licensure within the industry and supported by efforts of the Office of Drinking Water, DPOR, and technical assistance providers. Data obtained from DPOR on May 29, 2026.

Table 1			
Number of Operators by Class as of May 29, 2026			
Class License	Number of 2025 Licensees	Number of 2026 Licensees	Net Gain (Loss) Since 2025 Report
6	185	197	12
5	248	281	33
4	294	316	22
3	318	360	42
2	313	332	19
1	740	797	57
Total	2098	2283	185

Licensed Operators are allowed to operate facilities that are classified at or below the level of their operations license. As an example, a Class 3 Operator may operate a Class 3, Class 4, Class 5, or Class 6 Waterworks. A Class 6 Operator may only operate a Class 6 Waterworks. Table 2 shows the number of licensed waterworks operators serving Public Waterworks as designated operators by operator license class. Information was queried from the State Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) on June 16, 2026. This data shows that operators are using their higher level of licenses at waterworks of lower classification. This means that more highly-qualified operators are responsible for overseeing smaller waterworks, adding to the protection of public health with the experience and qualifications that they bring.

Table 2 Number of Waterworks Served by Licensed Operators (by License Class)		
Operator License Class	# of Operators in SDWIS with that License Class	# of PWS's Served by an Operator at that License Class
6	112	174
5	65	116
4	83	394
3	79	357
2	55	173
1	147	335
No License	N/A	11
Total	558	1568

Table 3 shows the breakdown of operators by system type. Staff obtained the information from SDWIS on June 16, 2026. Note that this data does not count more than one operator per system, only if the system had an active designated operator during the reporting period. ODW Staff actively follows up with owners of public waterworks that lack the required licensed operator. They provide technical assistance, referrals, and issue violations as appropriate.

Table 3 Percent of Waterworks with Licensed Designated Operators			
System Type	# of Systems	# of Systems with Active Designated Operator	% of Systems with Active Designated Operator
C	1062	1054	99.25%
NTNC	498	495	99.39%
Total	1560	1549	99.29%

3.0 Operator Qualifications

The DPOR Licensure Board bases licensing on having applicable experience and education, and demonstration of knowledge of core competencies through a closed-book examination. The applicant has 24 months to take and pass the licensing exam. The passing examination score received by an applicant is valid for a period of 10 years from the date of the examination. (18VAC160-30-70)

Additional conditions are in place for individuals seeking licensure in Virginia based on an existing license in another state. (18VAC160-30-80) Effective July 1, 2023, Universal Licensing Recognition (ULR) became effective (Code of Virginia, §54.1-205). This is not reciprocity but is an alternative method of entry to Virginia's Operator licensure for out-of-state individuals. Applicants holding a license in another state can apply for a license in Virginia of equal classification. The application verifies license status, experience, examination requirements, disciplinary actions, and convictions and requires that the applicant

pay a fee. Applicants holding a license in an adjacent state and in good standing do not need to hold it for a specific length of time to be eligible for ULR. Applicants in all other states must hold their license for at least three years and be in good standing to be eligible to apply for ULR. If all criteria are met, the applicant is issued a Virginia Waterworks Operator license of equal classification. The Licensure Board reserves the right to require an examination. (Code of Virginia § 54.1-2301.B-2)

3.1. Exams

On June 1, 2018, Virginia began using the Associated Boards of Certification (ABC) 2017 Standardized Exam, which replaced the 2012 version, for class 1 through 4 exam candidates. In 2023, ABC was renamed Water Professionals International (WPI) and continued providing licensing exams for waterworks operators through its testing service, ABC Testing. It is important to note that Virginia's classifications of licenses do not have the same numerical designation as the WPI License Exams: An individual sitting for their Virginia Class 1 license will take the WPI Class 4 exam; Virginia Class 2 will take the WPI Class 3 exam; Virginia Class 3 will take the WPI Class 2 exam; and Virginia Class 4 will take the WPI Class 1 exam. Virginia's class 5 candidates continue to take WPI's Very Small Water Systems examination, and the class 6 examination consists of questions from WPI's item bank and is a Virginia customized exam. ABC has fully implemented Remote Proctoring examinations in addition to Center Based Testing. Remote Proctoring exams allow for increased access to tests. In 2025, 102 exams out of 724 total exams were taken via remote proctor, representing 14.1% of all licensing exams.

3.2. Experience

DPOR requirements express length of experience in terms of calendar periods of full-time employment as an operator or as an operator-in-training at a waterworks in the same category as the license. Regulations define one year of experience as a minimum of 220 work days or 1,760 hours in a 12-month period. A workday is defined as attendance at a waterworks to the extent required for proper operation. Partial credit may be given for actual hours of work experience if the applicant works as an operator or as an operator-in-training less than full time. (18VAC160-30-100)

All experience claimed on the licensure application is certified by the individual's immediate supervisor or a representative of the facility owner if the immediate supervisor is unavailable. Operators-in-training must gain experience under the supervision of an operator holding a valid waterworks operator license of a classification equal to or higher than the classification of the waterworks. The supervising operator or a representative of the facility owner certifies the experience on the application form as accurate and relevant to the classification of license for the applicant. (18VAC160-30-95)

An applicant for a provisional license at a nonclassified waterworks may meet experience requirements through experience gained as an operator or operator-in-training at a nonclassified facility under certain conditions. The experience must be obtained at a nonclassified facility that is comparable in size and treatments process to the one where they will be working. The experience is obtained while performing duties that provide experience comparable to that obtained at a classified facility. Experience operating and maintaining water distribution systems shall only be considered for a Class 5 or Class 6 provisional waterworks operator license. Experience limited solely to nonoperating duties will not be counted as experience as a provisional operator or operator-in-training. (18VAC160-30-120)

Education may substitute for part of the required experience in the category of license applied for at a rate of one month of experience credit for each semester hour of college credit. Coursework must be relevant to the category and classification of the license being sought. The college credit must be from an accredited college or university that is approved or accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, a regional or national accreditation association, or by an accreditation agency that is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. (18VAC160-30-110 and 18VAC160-30-130)

Experience gained in waterworks operations may be substituted for up to one-half of the required experience in the alternate category so long as the experience was gained in an equivalent or higher class of facility. Substitutions shall not exceed 50% of the total experience required for licensure. (18VAC160-30-110 and 18VAC160-30-130)

3.3. Education

The minimum education requirement for an operator's license is a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate. There are provisions in the Licensure Regulations for a candidate without a high school diploma to get a license by substituting extra operator in-training experience for education. Board-approved waterworks operator training courses may be utilized for experience at a rate of one month experience for each training credit approved by the board. Individuals may use advanced degrees (certain associate, bachelor, master's degrees) from an accredited college or university to meet specific education requirements. (18VAC160-30-140)

3.4 Specific requirements for licenses

In addition to specific requirements for the different levels of licensure, there are also general requirements that apply to all licenses as follows:

General Requirements for Licensure:

This section establishes the general eligibility requirements that all applicants must satisfy in addition to any category- or classification-specific licensure qualifications.

Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and provide an address of record to the Board. If a post office box is provided, a physical address must also be submitted.

The regulation requires applicants to disclose certain criminal convictions in accordance with § 54.1-204 of the Code of Virginia, including felony convictions within the previous 20 years and misdemeanor convictions involving lying, cheating, or stealing within the previous three years, excluding marijuana-related convictions. The Board may consider this information when determining eligibility for licensure and may deny an application when authorized by law. Applicants are entitled to request further review of any such decision through the Administrative Process Act.

Applicants must also disclose any disciplinary actions taken against a professional or occupational license, certification, or registration in any jurisdiction. Reportable actions include suspensions, revocations, surrenders, monetary penalties, and other corrective measures. Such actions may be considered by the Board in evaluating an applicant's qualifications for licensure. 18VAC160-30-60

Continuing Professional Education:

This section establishes the continuing professional education (CPE) requirements that licensed waterworks and wastewater works operators must complete during each renewal cycle. Licensees who have held a license for less than two years at the time of expiration are exempt from the CPE requirement for that renewal period.

The regulation requires varying numbers of CPE contact hours based on license classification. Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 operators must complete 18 contact hours; Class 4 operators must complete 16 contact hours; Class 5 operators must complete six contact hours; and Class 6 operators must complete four contact hours. The Board may grant additional time for a licensee to complete required CPE; however, hours used to satisfy a previous renewal cycle may not also be applied toward a subsequent renewal cycle. To ensure educational diversity, licensees may not receive credit for completing the same course with identical content more than once during a renewal cycle. Licensees who teach qualifying courses may receive CPE credit for instruction, although additional credit is not available for repeated presentations of the same course content during the same renewal cycle. The regulation also allows a one-time credit of four contact hours during a renewal cycle for the initial development or substantial revision of a CPE course.

Additionally, safety-related coursework is limited to no more than 25 percent of the total CPE hours required for renewal. Additionally, applicants must comply with the Board's standards of conduct and practice during the application process and throughout the period of licensure. 18VAC160-30-190

3.4.1. Specific requirements for a Class 6 license

Candidates for licensure as a Class 6 waterworks operator shall meet one of the following requirements and pass a board-approved exam (60.9% Pass Rate):

- have (i) a high school diploma or equivalent and (ii) at least three months of experience as an operator-in-training in a Class 6 or higher waterworks; or
- have (i) no high school diploma or equivalent and (ii) at least six months of experience as an operator-in-training in a Class 6 or higher waterworks.

The Licensure Board determined in its *Regulations* that experience as an operator at a Class 6 facility is not transferable to higher classifications.

3.4.2. Specific requirements for a Class 5 license

Candidates for licensure as a Class 5 waterworks operator shall meet one of the following requirements and pass a board-approved exam (66.0% Pass Rate):

- have (i) a high school diploma or equivalent and (ii) at least three months of experience as an operator-in-training in a Class 5 or higher, waterworks; or
- have (i) no high school diploma or equivalent² and (ii) at least six months of experience as an operator-in-training in a Class 5 or higher waterworks.

The Licensure Board determined in its *Regulations* that experience as an operator at a Class 5 facility is not transferable to higher classifications.

3.4.3. Specific requirements for a Class 4 license

Candidates for licensure as a Class 4 waterworks operator shall meet one of the following requirements and pass a board-approved exam (42.1% Pass Rate):

- have (i) a high school diploma or equivalent and (ii) at least six months of experience as an operator-in-training in a Class 4 or higher waterworks; or
- have (i) no high school diploma or equivalent and (ii) at least one year of experience as an operator-in-training in a Class 4 or higher waterworks, of which at least six months without substitutions shall be as an operator-in-training in a Class 4 or higher waterworks

3.4.4. Specific requirements for a Class 3 license

Candidates for licensure as a Class 3 waterworks operator shall meet one of the following requirements and pass a board-approved exam (41.8% Pass Rate):

- have (i) a bachelor's or master's degree in engineering or engineering technology, or in a related physical, biological, environmental, or chemical science, or an associates degree in waterworks or related physical, biological, environmental, or chemical science; and (ii) at least six months of experience as an operator-in-training in a Class 4 or higher waterworks, of which at least three months without substitutions shall be as an operator-in-training in a Class 4 or higher waterworks; or
- have (i) a high school diploma or equivalent and (ii) at least one year of experience as an operator-in-training in a Class 4 or higher waterworks, of which at least six months without substitutions shall be as an operator-in-training in a Class 4 or higher waterworks; or
- have (i) no high school diploma or equivalent, (ii) a Class 4 license, and (iii) a total of at least one and one half years of experience as an operator or operator-in-training in a Class 4 or higher waterworks, of which at least nine months without substitutions shall be as an operator-in-training in a Class 4 or higher waterworks.

3.4.5. Specific requirements for a Class 2 license

Candidates for licensure as a Class 2 waterworks operator shall meet one of the following requirements and pass a board-approved exam (46.9% Pass Rate):

- have (i) a bachelor's or master's degree in engineering or engineering technology, or in a related physical, biological, environmental, or chemical science, or an associates degree in waterworks or related physical, biological, environmental, or chemical science; and (ii) a total of at least one year of experience, of which at least six months without substitutions shall be as an operator-in-training in a Class 3 or higher waterworks;
- have (i) a high school diploma or equivalent, and (ii) a total of at least two years of experience, of which at least one year without substitutions shall be as an operator or operator in-training in a Class 3 or higher waterworks; or
- have (i) no high school diploma or equivalent, (ii) a Class 3 license, and (iii) a total of at least three years of experience, of which at least one and one half years without substitutions shall be as an operator or operator in-training in a Class 3 or higher waterworks.

3.4.6. Specific requirements for a Class 1 license

Candidates for licensure as a Class 1 waterworks operator shall meet one of the following requirements and pass a board-approved examination (30.5% Pass Rate):

- have (i) a bachelor's or master's degree in engineering or engineering technology, or in a related physical, biological, environmental, or chemical science, or an associates degree in waterworks or related physical, biological, environmental, or chemical science; (ii) a Class 2 license; and (iii) a total of at least one and one half years of experience, of which at least nine months without substitutions shall be as an operator or operator-in-training in a Class 2 or higher waterworks;
- have (i) a high school diploma or equivalent , (ii) a Class 2 license and (iii) a total of at least three years of experience, of which at least ~~two~~ one and one half years without substitutions shall be as an operator or operator-in-training in a Class 2 or higher waterworks; or
- have (i) no high school diploma or equivalent, (ii) a Class 2 license, and (iii) a total of at least four years of experience, of which at least two years without substitutions shall be as an operator or operator in-training in a Class 2 or higher waterworks.

3.5. Grandparenting

Licensure regulations have no provisions for grandparenting of waterworks operators. In 1999, when EPA published the *Federal Operator Certification Guidelines*, there were 1,992 operators. At present, all waterworks operators require an active waterworks license issued per the DPOR regulations stated above.

3.6. Reciprocity

The Board does not specifically recognize any other state's license as meeting its requirements for licensure. However, per 18 *Virginia Administrative Code* §160-30-80, "an applicant holding a valid license or certificate in another jurisdiction who meets the requirements of this chapter, including having equivalent experience and education, shall pass a board approved examination to become licensed." For waterworks operators, the current Board approved examination is the Water Professionals International (WPI) national exam. Out-of-state applicants are not required to retake the WPI examination in Virginia if they have already passed the WPI exam. The Board would accept equivalent experience and education in another state as meeting its requirements. A letter of good standing issued by the licensing authority in the other state would need to be submitted with an application and would need to include the method of licensure (exam, experience, education) for the board to consider an out-of-state license equivalent.

On July 1, 2023, DPOR began implementing Universal Licensing Recognition (ULR) procedures and requirements for qualified individuals who are licensed in other states to obtain an equivalent license more easily in Virginia. The program, described in Section 3.0, is for people who are in good standing in all states where they are licensed, were required to pass a competency exam and met training standards to obtain their original state license, and pay all applicable Virginia fees. Workers who move to Virginia must apply for a license through the DPOR Board for Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operators and Onsite Sewage System Professionals Board before working in the Commonwealth. Since implementing ULR, DPOR has issued 36 waterworks licenses under these provisions.

4.0 Enforcement

4.1. Waterworks Operators

The Licensure Board has the power to discipline and fine any licensee and to suspend or revoke or refuse to renew or reinstate any license as well as the power to deny any application for a license under the provisions of Chapter 23 of Title 54.1 of the *Code of Virginia* and its regulations for any of the following (18VAC160-30-320):

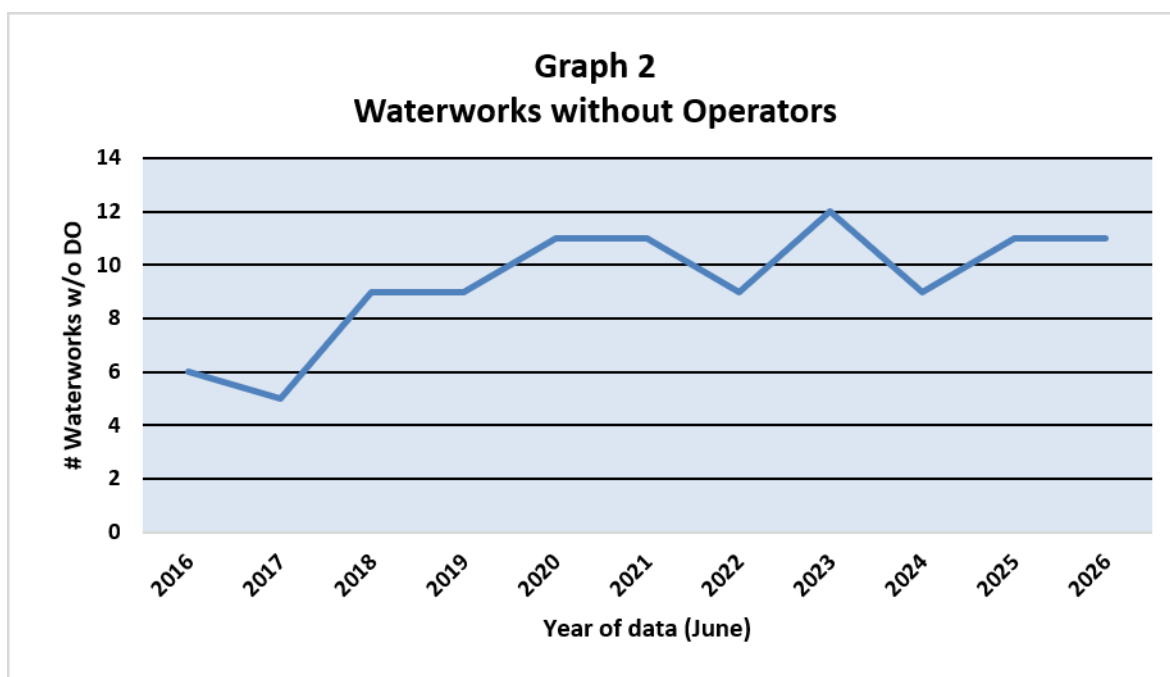
1. Violating, inducing another to violate, cooperating with another to violate, or combining or conspiring with or acting as agent, partner, or associate for another to violate any of the provisions of Chapter 1 (§ [54.1-100](#) et seq.), 2 (§ [54.1-200](#) et seq.), 3 (§ [54.1-300](#) et seq.), or 23 (§ [54.1-2300](#) et seq.) of Title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia, or any of the regulations of the board.
2. Obtaining or attempting to obtain a license by false or fraudulent representation or maintaining, renewing, or reinstating a license by false or fraudulent representation.
3. Failing to report a change as required by [18VAC160-30-300](#).
4. A licensee having been convicted or found guilty in any jurisdiction or disciplined by any jurisdiction, board, or administrative body in any jurisdiction of any offense or violation enumerated in [18VAC160-30-310](#). Review of convictions will be subject to the requirements of §[54.1-204](#) of the Code of Virginia.
5. Failing to inform the board in writing within 30 days that the licensee was convicted, found guilty in any jurisdiction, or disciplined by any jurisdiction, board, or administrative body of any offense or violation enumerated in [18VAC160-30-310](#).
6. Actions constituting negligence, misconduct, or incompetence in the practice of the profession, including:
 - a. Having undertaken to perform or having performed a professional assignment that the licensee is not qualified to perform by education, experience, or training.
 - b. Not demonstrating reasonable care, judgment, or application of the required knowledge, skill, and ability in the performance of the licensee's duties.
 - c. Failing to adequately supervise and review work performed by licensed or unlicensed employees under direct supervision of the licensee.
 - d. Failing to act in providing waterworks and wastewater works operator services in a manner that safeguards the interests of the public.
7. Actions constituting improper, fraudulent, or dishonest conduct, including:
 - a. Making any misrepresentation or engaging in acts of fraud or deceit when providing professional services.
 - b. Submitting or recording or assisting another in the submission or recording of false or misleading operational information relating to the performance and monitoring requirements of a waterworks or wastewater works.
 - c. Allowing a license issued by the board to be used by another.

4.2. Waterworks Owners

The Waterworks Regulations, 12VAC5-590-461, requires owners of classified waterworks to have operating staff for the waterworks that can meet all requirements in the Virginia *Waterworks Regulations*. Classified waterworks shall be operated by an operator having a valid Waterworks Operator license issued by the Commonwealth of Virginia with a classification equal to or higher than the classification of the waterworks or water treatment plant being operated. The number and qualifications of persons constituting the operating staff at a waterworks depend principally upon the classification and capacity of the waterworks, the number of persons served by the waterworks, and the complexity of the treatment process

or processes. If a classified waterworks or water treatment plant is without a required operator, then the owner shall notify the department as soon as practical but no later than 24 hours of such an occurrence. Any waterworks that fails to comply with these requirements may face enforcement action, which may include violations, administrative orders, criminal prosecution, civil actions, and penalties.

As of June 16, 2026, waterworks without a licensed operator in the State Drinking Water Information System (SDWIS) database totaled 11 systems. This equates to a compliance rate of 99.29%. Staff is actively working with owners to assist with finding appropriately qualified operators and also issuing Notices of Alleged Violation as necessary.



Waterworks owners are responsible for notifying VDH – ODW when they have secured a licensed operator. When notified, VDH – ODW updates the operator in responsible charge in SDWIS after checking the online DPOR operator database. Routine verification occurs when VDH – ODW staff inspects the waterworks.

5.0 Certification Renewal

DPOR Staff is currently working to file a Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) to amend the renewal requirements to require licensees to submit proof of continuing professional education (CPE) completion with their renewal application and payment.

5.1. License Expiration

Licenses for waterworks operators expire on the last day of February of each odd numbered year. The licensee must provide a renewal application and fee in order for their license to be renewed. Submittal of the renewal fee certifies that the licensee is in continued compliance with the Standards of Practice and Conduct and continuing professional education requirements of the Regulations. The board may deny

renewal of a license for the same reasons as it may refuse initial licensure or discipline a licensee. (18VAC160-30-40 and 18VAC160-30-160)

5.2. Continuing Education

As part of the reduction in regulatory burden changes, modifications to requirements for Continuing Education were made by the Licensing Board effective January 16, 2026. (18VAC160-30-190)

Each licensed waterworks operator is required to have completed the following number of continuing professional education (CPE) contact hours required for his or her class of license before the license is renewed:

- Class 1, 2, and 3 operators shall obtain a minimum of 18 contact hours during each license renewal cycle; a minimum of five contact hours pertaining to utility management is required of Class 1 and Class 2 waterworks operators.
- Class 4 operators shall obtain a minimum of 16 contact hours during each license renewal cycle;
- Class 5 operators shall obtain a minimum of six contact hours during each license renewal cycle;
- or
- Class 6 operators shall obtain a minimum of four contact hours during each license renewal cycle.

Licensees are required to maintain documentation of completion of the required hours of CPE for a period of at least two years following the end of the license renewal cycle for which the CPE was taken. The audit process for continuing education randomly selects operators from the operator database for an audit. (18VAC160-30-230)

6.0 Resources Needed to Implement the Program

Waterworks management and staff request free and low-cost training alternatives as waterworks continue to face revenue shortfalls. Low certification exam pass rates place an even greater demand for ODW sponsored and in-house training sponsored by individual waterworks and partners, such as Mountain Empire Community College (MECC), Virginia Chapter of the American Water Works Association (VA AWWA), Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP) and the Virginia Rural Water Association (VRWA). The Operator Certification Program in ODW works very closely with the Capacity Development Program to resolve issues at waterworks. The classes that ODW offers are often part of a larger solution to moving the waterworks into a position of having more technical, managerial, and financial capacity.

The training offered through Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) set-aside funds included many trainings, short courses, and seminars contracted through Virginia Tech. The classes cover a variety of technical, managerial, and financial topics. Examples are *Continuing Professional Education Water Quality Broadcast* series, the *Applied Math and Basic Science* short course, the *Hands on Training at a Full-Scale Water Plant* short course and the weeklong *Management, Methods, and Money: Understanding Concepts of Capacity Development* courses. Report Sections 6.3.3 through 6.3.8 provide details on Virginia Tech training offerings. ODW provides funding support for MECC through the Capitalization Grant set-asides and also contracts with VA AWWA for cross connection control classes and small systems training.

The VDH-ODW also funds one full-time position out of the DWSRF 15% set-asides to manage operator certification. This statewide position, the Operator Certification and Training Manager, is responsible for ensuring that the Operator Certification Program in Virginia remains robust, that resources are provided statewide in support of advancing operator certification, and that federal and state regulations are applied consistently. This experienced staff member liaises with state and national agencies and organizations including USEPA, DPOR, SERCAP, AWWA, ASDWA, and RCAP. Additionally, the Operator Certification and Training Manager facilitates online training to waterworks owners and operators on regulatory updates and other time-sensitive topics at no cost to the waterworks or operators. The funding provided by EPA through the DWSRF is critical to the success of this program.

6.1. Program Funding

DPOR funds the operator-licensing program through the collection of license application fees and license renewal fees. DPOR uses no general or grant funds to support the licensure program.

6.2. Operator Training Issues

There are limited opportunities for in-person, affordable, hands-on training in Virginia. Training offered, even by nonprofit organizations, can be costly for the waterworks owner, operator, or candidate to attend. For example, the registration fee to attend the Virginia Tech Summer Short School is approximately \$1,000.00. Total cost for training is much higher with lodging, mileage, and evening meals. Adding these costs raises the training expense to over \$1,900.00. When added to the week each operator is absent from work, owners of small waterworks face considerable costs. For some small waterworks, if their sole operator attends, they must contract for a replacement. Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, waterworks owners must compensate operators for Sunday travel or attending evening study halls with overtime. ODW helped sponsor 8 students to attend the Virginia Tech Water Short School in 2026.

Virginia has been working to proactively address a decline in licensed operators that has been observed nationally. During our annual Operator Certification / Capacity Development Stakeholders Meeting (refer to Section 8.1), staff facilitates a discussion of statewide assistance providers. Stakeholders bring up challenges they are seeing in different areas of the state which then helps the group identify statewide issues. We continue to see low pass rates on the WPI Licensing Exam. Additionally, it appears that more operators are retiring than are entering the profession. Lastly, while online courses continue to be popular, many of the individuals pursuing licensure for the first time actually need in-person instruction. Together we are working to move these issues forward, using many of the approaches identified in this report.

6.3 DWSRF Sponsored Training

VDH continues to offer training and other operator certification support using DWSRF set-asides. These opportunities are detailed below.

6.3.1. CPE Video Teleconference Series

The VDH-CPE Broadcast Series is a series of webinars hosted by Virginia Tech and sponsored by VDH - ODW featuring various instructors that cover a variety of topics specific to water operations and utilities. These virtual workshops are broadcast throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia via Zoom and are provided at no-cost to the attendees. Using interactive technology, participants can engage in discussions and ask specific questions of the presenters and participants around the state. The webinars are held on a

Wednesday in February, March, April, May, July, September, October, and November and are scheduled from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Evaluations and feedback from attendees are consistently positive.

Table 4 Continuing and Professional Education Video Teleconference Series			
Title	Date	Location	Attendees
Nanoparticles, Polymers, AUV's	6/18/2025	Webinar	225
VDH Regulatory Update	8/13/2025	Webinar	314
Developing the Water and Wastewater Professional	9/17/2025	Webinar	289
Inorganic Contaminants	10/15/2025	Webinar	275
Impacts of Hurricane Helene	11/12/2025	Webinar	247
Keeping Up with the Safe Drinking Water Act	2/18/2026	Webinar	337
Water Audits and Loss Control	3/18/2026	Webinar	279
Contaminants of Concern	4/15/2026	Webinar	274
Tank Sites & Security	5/13/2026	Webinar	257

6.3.2. Mountain Empire Community College (MECC) Online Degree Program

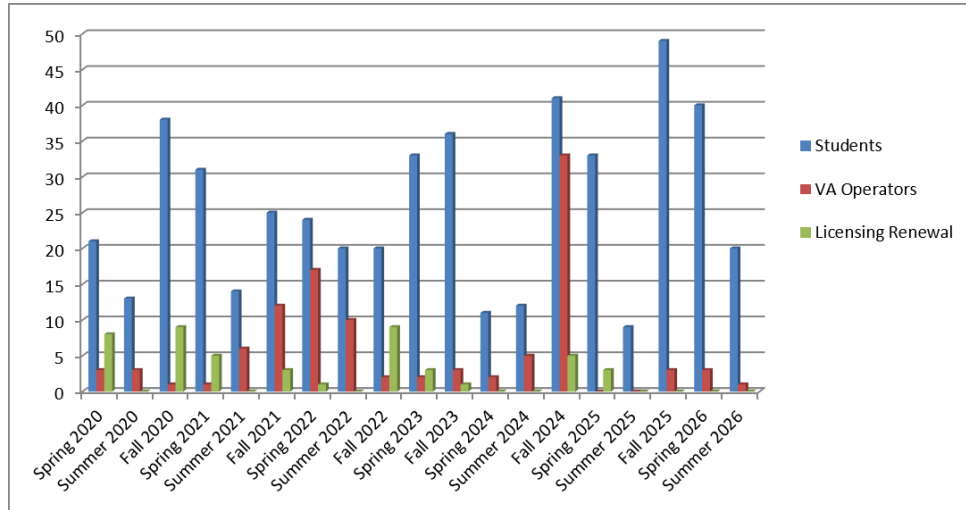
VDH-ODW uses set-aside funds from the DWSRF to fund a two-year, online, degree program for waterworks operators at Mountain Empire Community College: *Environmental Science – Water/Wastewater Specialization AAS* (65 credits) and a *Water Treatment Plant Operator Career Studies Certificate* (CSC) (25 credits). New for 2026, this program is expanding to the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), offering the entire program to all VCCS institutions. Funding support for this program has changed slightly beginning January 1, 2026, with the new contract cycle. In 2025, funding support covered the salary of the Assistant Professor, head of the program. This Professor remains responsible for the program, but now the program is including a stipend for a recruitment and retention specialist to increase enrollment and retention of students. This person will conduct outreach and marketing, be a point of contact for students enrolled in the program and will ensure all paperwork is completed so it remains available across the VCCS. Three new modules will also be added to the AAS/CSC. The VDH Office of Drinking Water believes its support not only helps to develop operators professionally but also promotes waterworks operation as a career to students.

In the 2025 academic year, there were 82 individuals enrolled in the program, representing two more than the prior year. The program graduated six associate's in applied science students and 3 students in the Career Studies Certificate Program.

From the graph below, data shows that for the Spring 2026 semester, there were 40 students enrolled in the AAS Degree. Thirty-seven of these students are not current operators, meaning that 83% of the students are not operators. This represents an encouraging potential for new operators entering the industry.

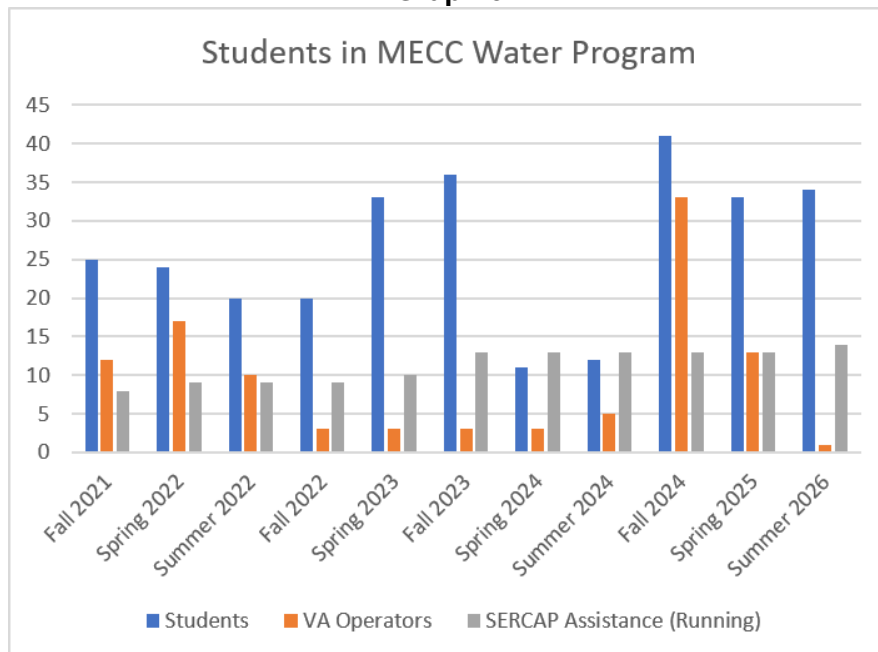
Graph 4

Students enrolled in the Associate of Applied Science program at Mountain Empire Community College



In 2021, MECC joined in partnership with the Southeast Rural Community Assistance Program to increase the number of students enrolling in the online Associate of Applied Science program at MECC. In recent years, SERCAP directly supported the program by purchasing a rolling audio-visual cart for the professor to record lecture videos and have provided laptops to students in the program. Once the student completes the MECC program, they are allowed to keep the laptop. Additionally, they continue to help promote the program and provide free online math tutoring for low-income individuals. Since partnering with SERCAP, a total of 14 students have been recruited and provided laptop assistance.

Graph 5



The Associate of Applied Science degree program is continually being improved. Our current electromechanical instructor is creating an Instrumentation and Control Class with an online component. We are working together to ensure that water treatment students will gain the necessary knowledge to operate the control panels present at treatment plants. All course material is being revised to incorporate more licensing exam material and questions. Exams are being created in an online format to help prepare students for the online format and test anxiety. MECC is moving toward including a synchronous requirement for each of its classes to ensure that students are consistently engaged with instructors. To accomplish this, the courses are being moved from continuous enrollment to semester-based enrollment. This may have an impact on the overall enrollment in the program but is necessary to roll it out to the Virginia Community College System.

MECC continues to support internships in the state. Treatment plants from across the state contact MECC for possible student placement as well as allow students to use their plant for the hands-on experience needed.

MECC's AAS/CSC programs are currently going through an external review process from the VCCS Excellence in Distance Learning Toolkit (EDLT) review team. Once program documents are reviewed, if changes are made according to the review team, the programs can become credentialed in the VCCS. This has a high probability of increasing program enrollment.

6.3.3. Basic Groundwater Course for Small Systems

This two-day Groundwater Course teaches operators of very small waterworks to learn competencies for a Class 6 operator. The course material may also be suitable for some Class 5 operators; however, the curriculum does not cover all competencies for a Class 5 operator. This course was held in Newport News, Virginia. During the reporting period, Short Course dates were February 10-12, 2026, with 23 attendees.

6.3.4. Applied Math and Basic Science Course

This course covers the math and science of real-world, water treatment applications. It is an intensive course that builds from introductory, basic skills to the application of many important principles. VT conducted the course on June 1-5, 2026, in Roanoke, VA, with 14 attendees.

6.3.5. Hands-on Training at a Full-Scale Water Plant

This program focuses on hands-on full-scale exercises at a water treatment plant. Subject matter experts provide the actual instruction, i.e., supervisors and lead operators, at the plant under a facilitator from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Virginia Tech. This program demonstrates and supplements lessons learned in the annual summer short courses at Virginia Tech. The goal is to offer training that helps operators understand the function of treatment systems, operate their system optimally, and produce safe water. VT conducted the course on November 5-6, in Salem, VA, with 18 attendees and again on March 24-25, 2026, in Newport News, VA with 9 attendees.

6.3.6. Water Operations Math

VT and ODW designed this 20-hour course to help both licensure candidates and experienced operators strengthen their understanding of the applied math used in the operation of conventional water plants and small water systems. Attendees will find this course helpful when preparing to face the math portions of Class VI – Class I certification exams. VT offered the course on March 2-16, 2026, with 18 attendees.

6.3.7. Operation and Maintenance of Distribution Systems

The City of Virginia Beach, Western Virginia Water Authority and Virginia Tech present this weeklong short course for distribution system operators. This “team approach” enables a comprehensive course specifically for distribution system workers. City of Staunton Department of Public Utilities and Western Virginia Water Authority hosts this training. Partners other than those mentioned above included the City of Salem and the Virginia Rural Water Association in the planning phase. In addition to the instructors provided by the above partners, the New River Valley Regional Water Authority provided instructors.

Organizers hold lectures and demonstrations in the mornings and demonstrations in the field and hands-on exercises are in the afternoons. Hands-on or demonstration topics included: proper lifting techniques, installation of pipes and valves, fire hydrant maintenance and flushing, water main leak detection, GPS and utility location, water main breaks and repairs, service connections and meter installation, pipe repairs, confined space entry, fall safety, trailer operation, excavation equipment, shoring excavated trenches, using an automated valve operator, industrial control systems, and pumps. This course was offered in Roanoke/Salem October 27-31, 2025, with 17 attendees and May 4-8, 2026, with 18 attendees.

6.3.8. Basic Groundwater Math

This course focuses on the math associated with small systems, ranging in classification from Class VI to IV. The course is also designed to complement our short course, Basic Groundwater for Small Systems, which has been offered and popular for several years. Among the topics addressed in this second groundwater course over a 3-day period are basic math, treatment systems, disinfection, water source, administrative math, hydraulics, and chemical feeders. This course will be held on September 29 – October 1, in Roanoke, VA.

6.3.9. Management, Methods, & Money: Understanding Concepts in Capacity Development

This course is designed to cover crucial areas like management, technical operations, regulations & finances. Over three days, participants work through a real-world case study, with capacity development issues, learning about owner responsibilities/liabilities, business & managerial operations, utility operations and asset management as well as software tools for managing a waterworks. This is a supervisory level course. It was held July 21-24, 2025, in Richmond, VA with 18 attendees.

6.3.10 Establishing a Successful & Sustainable Waterworks: Revenues, Rates, & Funding

This supervisory course builds from the foundation of Management, Methods, & Money and expands to include understanding and assessing needs, budgeting, rate setting, loans & grants, and how to clearly communicate with the public. Participants are instructed by industry and VDH professionals on how to build a Waterworks Business Operation Plan as required by the Code of Virginia. It was held in Richmond, VA August 19-21, 2025, with 16 participants.

6.4. Other VDH Sponsored Training

6.4.1. Drinking Water Fluoridation Course

During the period of July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026, the Community Water Fluoridation (CWF) program continued updating the CWF website with current information to educate the public on the benefits of CWF and information for waterworks owners and operators seeking information on fluoridation as a practice and funding assistance. In collaboration with ODW and the Virginia Health Catalyst, a webinar was conducted

that educated 54 waterworks professionals on the benefits of fluoride to the public, the safety in handling the mineral in the plant and how to properly address questions from the community regarding fluoride. In-person training on fluoridation was provided to students who attended the Water Operator Short School in 2025.

6.4.2. Cross-Connection Control Workshop

VA AWWA offers both 16-hour and 40-hour workshops for backflow prevention device workers of varying hours of experience in support of the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Virginia *Waterworks Regulations*. The workshop design gives participants a thorough classroom and hands-on review of the methods to test and inspect reduced pressure zone and other backflow prevention devices. Training includes both classroom and hands-on work with actual devices.

This training course addresses the following topics: definitions and related terms; controlling agencies and regulations; cross-connection record keeping; examples of cross connections; types of backflow protection devices and equipment; in-line inspection; and hands-on practice with test equipment. ODW supports this class by presenting on the Virginia Regulations. Class size is restricted to support the wet lab training. AWWA provides both CEUs and CPE credits for this workshop. During this reporting period, a 16-hour Cross Connection Control Training was held in Roanoke, Virginia and three 40- hour classes were held in Fairfax, Williamsburg, and Prince George, Virginia. Their specific dates and attendees are listed in Table 5.

6.4.3. Waterworks Operator Short Course

The flagship of Operator Certification training is the weeklong Short Course that has been held at Virginia Tech since the 1930's. There are three levels to the course: introductory, intermediate, and advanced. The curricula for the intermediate and advanced sessions build on the preceding year's course. VT held the Water course June 22 -26, 2026, and had 79 attendees.

The first-year course concentrates on small waterworks using groundwater for their source with an introduction to other treatment technologies. The core subjects taught are cross connection control, disinfection, basic electricity, and safety. Fifty-two people attended Year 1 training.

The second-year course is primarily an introduction to surface water treatment. The instructor introduces topics like zeta potential, optimizing the coagulation process, pretreatment chemistry, and taste and odor control. Twenty-six people attended Year 2 training.

The third year focuses on surface water treatment with filtration, disinfection and disinfection byproducts, nuisance organisms, sedimentation, and flow measurement. Eighteen people attended Year 3 training.

Virginia Tech funds the course through student registration fees. Instructors volunteer their time on a pro bono basis. VDH staff provide in-kind instruction at many of the sessions.

6.4.4. All Hazards Emergency Preparedness and Security Training

The Virginia Department of Health - Office of Drinking Water Emergency Services Coordinator/ESF #3 Lead worked with various waterworks, local, state and federal agencies the last year. The coordinator worked with other Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), CISA, and the Virginia Fusion Center to host two in person cybersecurity tabletop exercises. The

exercises brought together VDH ODW, VDH LHD, Utilities, VDEM, and Local Emergency managers. CISA and the VA Fusion center attended to provide resources and participate in the exercises.

The coordinator worked with internal ODW staff to ensure waterworks owners and operators understood the Virginia statute that requires a 2-hour notification in the event of certain equipment failures, contaminations, or risks to public health. They also communicated directly with regulated waterworks about cyber threat alerts specifically relating to SCADA and automated control systems. ODW has engaged in operational and strategic planning discussions, maintained situational awareness through weather briefings, and coordinated with Field Office Directors and the VDH Incident Management Team to ensure readiness and continuity of drinking water operations across the Commonwealth.

VDH-ODW updated the public facing cybersecurity webpage to include enhanced resources and training opportunities and alerts on cybersecurity incidents. VDH-ODW sent out a survey to regulated waterworks and learned that only 57% of respondents were aware of a new requirement that certain cybersecurity incidents must be reported to the Virginia Fusion Center. This survey was also used to gauge interest in the regional cybersecurity tabletop exercises noted above.

6.5 Other Partner Sponsored Training

6.5.1. Virginia Section American Water Works Association Training

Below is a list of training conducted throughout Virginia by the VA AWWA. The list includes the previously highlighted Cross Connection Control trainings.

Table 5 Virginia Section American Water Works Association Training	
Event: Roundtable AMI and AMR Deployment Date: July 17, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 37	Event: Leadership Academy- Crucial Conversations – Part 1 Date: January 14, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 28
Event: Leadership Academy 25-26 DEI Agree to Disagree Date: July 16, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 29	Event: WAVE Book Club- The Diversity Bonus Date: January 14, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 12
Event: Small Community Assistance Planning Tool Date: July 23, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 33	Event: General Assembly Kickoff Info Session Date: January 29, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 44
Event: Good Lab Practices Conference Date: July 28-July 29, 2025 Location: Harrisonburg Registered Attendees: 147	Event: Who does what? Aligning roles to drive successful organizational change Date: February 11, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 73

Event: Making Waves- Delivering Impactful Presentations at Water Industry Events Webinar Date: July 29, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 103	Event: Virginia Utility Management Seminar- Money, Projects, and People Date: February 19, 2026 Location: Henrico Registered Attendees: 106
Event: Ripple Effect Roundtable- Virginia's Water Resources Summer 2025 Session Date: July 31, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 43	Event: Southwest YP Professional Development at City of Salem WTP Date: February 26, 2026 Location: Salem, VA Registered Attendees: 7
Event: Technology Services- Crown Jewel Analysis Date: August 21, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 22	Event: Leadership Academy- Crucial Conversations- Part 2 Date: February 25, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 28
Event: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Book Club- The Namesake Date: August 27, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 8	Event: Cross Connection Control Training (40-hour course) Date: March 2-6, 2026 Location: Williamsburg Registered Attendees: 12
Event: Leadership Academy 24-25 Final Session and Graduation Date: September 8, 2025 Location: Virginia Beach, VA Registered Attendees: 29	Event: General Assembly Wrap-Up Info Session Date: March 19, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 28
Event: Leadership Academy 25-26 Kickoff Date: September 10, 2025 Location: Virginia Beach, VA Registered Attendees: 29	Event: The Annual Drinking Water Quality and Research Seminar Date: March 24, 2026 Location: Henrico Registered Attendees: 88
Event: WaterJAM 2025 Date: September 8-11, 2025 Location: Virginia Beach, VA Registered Attendees: 3102 Technical Sessions: 232 Workshops: 7 (121 Attendees) Continuing Education Hours Credited: 6456 Water Operator CPE Hours Credited: 2619.5	Event: Fireside Chat- Celebrating Women's History Month Date: March 27, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 32
Event: Small Systems Training- Risk, Resilience, Rates, Reporting, and More! Date: September 24, 2025 Location: Exmore Town Hall- Council Chambers Registered Attendees: 19	Event: WAVE Book Club- Born a crime- Stories from a South African Childhood Date: March 30, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 11
Event: Cross Connection Control Training – (16-hour course) Date: September 29-October 1, 2025 Location: Town of Leesburg Utility Maintenance Facility Registered Attendees: 15	Event: Public Information Awards and Lesson Plan Toolkit! Date: April 2, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 39

Event: 35 th Annual Water Distribution Seminar and Rodeo Date: October 6-8, 2025 Location: Holiday Inn Roanoke Airport- Conference Center Registered Attendees: 197	Event: HRSD James River SWIFT Tour and Presentation Date: April 16, 2026 Location: HRSD James River Treatment Plant Registered Attendees: 19
Event: Liquid Lifeline-Planning and Logistics for Emergency Bottled Water Supply Date: October 15, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 39	Event: Leadership Academy- 7 Dysfunctions of a Team Date: April 16, 2026 Location: Newport News Registered Attendees: 29
Event: Fall 2025 Plant Operations Seminar Date: October 22, 2025 Location: Blue Ridge Community College Plecker Workforce Center Registered Attendees: 42	Event: Distribution Systems Spring Seminar 2026 Date: April 28, 2026 Location: Henrico Registered Attendees: 44
Event: Virginia YP Summit Date: October 30, 2025 Location: Henrico Registered Attendees: 72	Event: The 26 th Annual Plant Operations Conference Date: May 6, 2026 Location: Virginia Beach Registered Attendees: 63
Event: Leadership Academy 25-26 Real Colors Training Date: November 6, 2025 Location: Henrico Registered Attendees: 29	Event: Sustainable Focus Plant Tour- UOSA Date: May 7, 2026 Location: Centreville Registered Attendees: 29
Event: Cross Connection Control Training (40-hour course) Date: November 10-14, 2025 Location: Virginia American Water, Woodbridge Registered Attendees: 11	Event: Leadership Academy- Industry Leaders Case Studies and Panel Discussion Date: May 13, 2026 Location: Fairfax Registered Attendees: 28
Event: Roundtable Network Penetration Testing for SCADA Part 1- Preparation Considerations Date: November 20, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 27	Event: Handle with care, best practices for chemical safety in water treatment Date: May 19, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 24
Event: Thoughtful Thursday: How to Have Better Family Conversations Date: December 4, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 30	Event: Applying Communications as a Management Function Date: May 20, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 32
Event: Small Systems Resilience and Board Training- Rates, Reporting, and More! Date: December 4, 2025 Location: Smithfield Registered Attendees: 25	Event: Thoughtful Thursday- Changing Currents: Earth Day Innovation out of Hampton Roads Date: May 28, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 29

Event: Customer Service Excellence for Utilities Date: December 10, 2025 Location: Newport News Registered Attendees: 25	Event: Leadership Academy- Values Based Leadership- Part I Date: June 3, 2026 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 28
Event: Customer Service Excellence for Utilities Date: December 11, 2025 Location: Fairfax Registered Attendees: 18	Event: Thoughtful Tuesday- Celebrating Mental Health and Pride Month Date: June 16, 2026 Location: Virtual Expected Attendees: 20
Event: Roundtable Discussion- Network Penetration Testing for SCADA- Part 2-Lessons Learned Date: December 18, 2025 Location: Virtual Registered Attendees: 32	

6.5.2. Virginia Rural Water Association (VRWA) Training

VRWA conducts training sessions throughout Virginia. VRWA continues to reach out to small systems and provide needed training to support operator certification, including several management courses in addition to courses that help prepare individuals to take the licensing exam. Most of the training courses are accepted by DPOR to meet the continuing education requirements for licensure renewal.

Table 6 Virginia Rural Water Association Training			
Title	Date	Location	Attendees
Disaster Recovery Training	7/16/2025	Covington	7
Basic VDOT WorkZone & Flagger Certification	8/19/2025	Remington	5
Temperament Based Leadership: Understanding Yourself & Others	8/21/2025	Williamsburg	57
Team Building: Importance and Implementation	8/21/2025	Williamsburg	58
Voices of Experience & Non-Violent Communication	8/21/2025	Williamsburg	51
Identifying Core Challenges for Today	8/21/2025	Williamsburg	60
Building the Talent Pipeline: Apprenticeships & the Future	8/21/2025	Williamsburg	57
Integrated Asset and Financial Performance	8/22/2025	Williamsburg	51
Where Do We Go From Here: Shaping the Path Forward	8/22/2025	Williamsburg	44
LLWI Practitioners: Sustaining Growth & Impact	8/22/2025	Williamsburg	49
Disaster Recovery Training	9/9/2025	St. Paul	6
Operator Math	9/10/2025	St. Paul	6
Emerging Contaminants - PFAS	9/10/2025	St. Paul	5
Disaster Recovery Training	9/16&18/2025	Palmyra	21
Basic VDOT WorkZone and Flagger Certification	10/20/2025	Fishersville	20
PFAS Sampling	10/21/2025	Fishersville	79

Electrical Safety	10/21/2025	Fishersville	99
Air in Pipelines - Water & Wastewater	10/21/2025	Fishersville	95
Meter Testing	10/21/2025	Fishersville	39
Discharge Monitoring Report How To's and Why's	10/21/2025	Fishersville	21
Backflow & Cross Connections - What you need to know	10/22/2025	Fishersville	77
Trenchless Technologies and Manhole Rehabilitation	10/22/2025	Fishersville	26
Initiating a Flushing Program and Exercising Valve Program	10/22/2025	Fishersville	62
Knock, Knock, VOSH is Here	10/22/2025	Fishersville	65
Sludge Digestion and Solids Handling	10/27/2025	Verona	4
Wastewater Operator Math	10/27/2025	Verona	2
Disaster Recovery Training	10/28/2025	Verona	21
Water & Wastewater Monitoring Tech	11/13/2025	Roanoke	31
Disaster Recovery Training	11/18/2025	Exmore	3
Basic VDOT WorkZone and Flagger Certification	12/11/2025	Madison Heights	14
Utility Executive Training	1/20/2026	Fork Union	7
Math for WW Operators	1/21/2026	Fork Union	6
Math for W Exam Candidates	1/21/2026	Fork Union	2
Guardians of Water: Reigniting Passion for the Essential Work of Water	1/21/2026	Roanoke	14
Sludge Digestion & Solids Handling	1/22/2026	Fork Union	14
Wastewater Collections Seminar for Public Utilities	2/11/2026	Roanoke	12
WW Operators Certification Class	2/18-19/2026	St. Paul	2
The Empowered Communicator	2/23/2026	Online	5
PFAS Drinking Water Enviro Workshop	2/24/2062	Leesburg	22
PFAS Drinking Water Enviro Workshop	2/26/2062	Smithfield	21
A Utility Safety Workshop: Protecting People, Plants, and the Public	4/20/2026	Roanoke	70
Asset Management in Action	4/20/2026	Roanoke	31
Office Professionals Mini-Conference	4/20/2026	Roanoke	24
A Rural Water's Journey Toward Sustainability	4/21/2026	Roanoke	35
Backflow Basics & Survey Tips	4/21/2026	Roanoke	73
Communicating During Uncertain Times	4/21/2026	Roanoke	61
Cyber Security and Your System	4/21/2026	Roanoke	50
Decentralized Water Reuse Project Delivery	4/21/2026	Roanoke	31
Differences Between Hollow Fiber PVDF Membranes	4/21/2026	Roanoke	42
Discussion of Common Problems in Water Distribution	4/21/2026	Roanoke	65
Drinking Water Regulatory Updates	4/21/2026	Roanoke	86
Emergency Preparedness	4/21/2026	Roanoke	73
Highs and Lows of Substance abuse in the Workplace	4/21/2026	Roanoke	50
Integrating a New Water Infrastructure into a Rural Town Water System	4/21/2026	Roanoke	47

Maximizing Cost Savings and Constructability through Collaborative Delivery	4/21/2026	Roanoke	30
Microscopy for WW (Part 1/2)	4/21/2026	Roanoke	54
Microscopy for WW (Part 2/2)	4/21/2026	Roanoke	38
Operator Ethics: The Foundation of Proper Decision-Making	4/21/2026	Roanoke	49
PFAS in Drinking Water: What VA Water Systems Need to Know	4/21/2026	Roanoke	93
Pipes, Pumps, and the Invisible Operator: How AI is Flowing into the Water Industry	4/21/2026	Roanoke	48
Steel & Concrete Surface Preparation Standards for WW Application	4/21/2026	Roanoke	22
Taking Control of Your Next Project	4/21/2026	Roanoke	14
Utilizing Polymerics to Protect and Rehabilitate W/WW Assets	4/21/2026	Roanoke	30
Ammonia-Based Aeration Control	4/22/2026	Roanoke	20
Countdown to Lead and Copper Rule Improvements	4/22/2026	Roanoke	49
FGX3-Novel Chemistry for FOG Control	4/22/2026	Roanoke	32
Managing and Mitigating Byproducts in Drinking Water Systems	4/22/2026	Roanoke	41
PFAS Considerations for WW Professionals	4/22/2026	Roanoke	49
Pitting & Leaking - Water System Acquisition Pitfalls	4/22/2026	Roanoke	54
Reactive to Proactive: A Progressive Approach to Optimizing Your Maintenance Program	4/22/2026	Roanoke	35
Success in Corrective and Preventive Action	4/22/2026	Roanoke	38
Teamwork Isn't Optional	4/22/2026	Roanoke	35
Temporary Storage Tanks and Instrumentation	4/22/2026	Roanoke	58
The Impacts of Hurricane Helene on a SW VA WW Utility	4/22/2026	Roanoke	55
The Total Cost Equation of Pipeline Material Selection	4/22/2026	Roanoke	19
Town of Aldie Water Tank Replacement	4/22/2026	Roanoke	60
Understanding the Funding Playing Field for W/WW Projects	4/22/2026	Roanoke	56
VPDES Permit Requirements	4/22/2026	Roanoke	44
Pump Training Basics	5/19/2026	Tazewell	16
Cross Connection Control and Survey Basics	5/19/2026	Tazewell	14
Operator Math	5/20/2026	Tazewell	28
Funding Sources for Utility Projects	5/21/2026	Tazewell	25
Emergency Preparedness	5/21/2026	Tazewell	23
Cyber Security for the Water Sector	6/23/2026	Warsaw	pending
Operator Math	6/23/2026	Warsaw	pending
Funding Sources for Utility Projects in Virginia	6/24/2026	Warsaw	pending

Building Financial Resilience in Small Water and Sewer Systems	6/24/2026	Warsaw	pending
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7.0 Recertification

The Licensing Board may allow for the recertification of operators who failed to renew their licenses by the license expiration date, in accordance with its regulations. The Licensing Board permits reinstatement if they receive the application for renewal more than 30 days late, within 24 months following the expiration date of the license. An individual who fails to reinstate the license within 24 months after the expiration date must apply for a new license and meet entry requirements in effect at the time of the submittal of the new application (18VAC160-30-160). The date on which the renewal application, any required documentation and the required fees are received determines whether the license is eligible for renewal. If still eligible, the operator pays a reinstatement fee as established in 18VAC160-30-40. The board may deny recertification of a license for the same reasons as it may refuse initial licensure. DPOR provided no recertifications during the reporting period.

An individual who fails to renew his or her license within 24 months after the expiration date printed on the license is ineligible for reinstatement. The operator must then apply for a new license by examination in accordance with the *Regulations (18VAC160-30-20 et seq.)*. However, the individual is eligible to sit for the examination in the same category and class of license as the expired license. (18VAC160-30-160)

8.0 Stakeholder Involvement

8.1 Operator Training Stakeholder Advisory Group

Stakeholder committee members are responsible for giving their respective organizational input into the planning and evaluation of operator training programs. ODW formed a standing stakeholder group to address how to best train small waterworks operators and has met throughout the development and implementation phases. During the reporting period, the standing advisory group met on March 12, 2026. Individual members change as their affiliations appoint replacements. The list of the current members/affiliations is below. In addition, Kai Daniel, Natural Resource Planner for Maryland's Department of the Environment Water Supply Program, attended the meeting to learn about how Virginia implements its Operator Certification and Capacity Development programs.

Table 7 Operator Training Advisory Group	
Member	Affiliation
Caleb Taylor	Virginia Tech (VT) Continuing and Professional Education - Water Programs Lead
Karen Hager	VT Continuing and Professional Education – Program Manager
Lucas Kintz	VT Continuing and Professional Education – Program Coordinator

Stephanie Keuther	DPOR Assistant Executive Director, Waterworks and Wastewater Works Operators and Onsite Sewage System Professionals Board (WWWOSSP) (Unable to Attend)
Cameron Parris	DPOR Regulatory Operations Administrator (WWWOSSP Board) (Unable to Attend)
Bob Canova	Virginia Western Community College, Instructor
Rosa Lee Cooke	Mountain Empire Community College, Assistant Professor (Unable to Attend)
Donna Lawson	Virginia Rural Water Association
Joey Hiner	SERCAP, Virginia Executive Director
Kelsey Brooks	University of Maryland, Environmental Finance Center
Geneva Hudgins	VA AWWA, Executive Manager (Unable to Attend)
Cynthia Barnes	VA AWWA, Training Coordinator (Unable to Attend)
Andy Koester	Moonshot Missions
Jarrett Talley	Director – Training, Capacity Development & Outreach, ODW
Julie Floyd	ODW Operator Certification & Training Manager
Sarah Rowe	ODW Capacity Development Supervisor
Lee Strickland	ODW Sustainability Coordinator (Capacity Development)

8.2. Licensure Board

The VDH – ODW Director is a member of the DPOR Licensure Board. VDH-ODW’s Training, Capacity Development and Outreach Director is invited to attend the DPOR Licensure Board’s Education Committee meetings, and the Operator Training Coordinator serves as a consultant to the Licensure Board and provides guidance on operator certification and training when needed. The Operator Training Coordinator reports on training activities and stakeholder recommendations to the Licensure Board and is invited to participate on ad hoc committees and work.

8.3. Virginia Section AWWA Education

ODW’s Operator Certification and Training Manager attends the VA AWWA Education Committee’s meetings as a permanent appointee. The committee’s goal is to ensure that the section meets identified training needs. The committee coordinates with other committees that provide training. The Education Committee offers webinars two to three times per year. In the plan year, the Committee hosted webinars on safety in the field, bottled water distribution, and common treatment challenges. The Committee is refocusing its efforts on supporting other committees rather than duplicating effort.

8.4. Waterworks Advisory Committee

The Waterworks Advisory Committee (WAC) is a standing committee appointed by the Commissioner. The WAC currently consists of 17 appointed members. Appointed members serve at the discretion of the Commissioner for three-year terms. WAC members may be appointed by the Commissioner to consecutive terms. WAC members consist of industry professionals employed outside the Virginia Department of Health and possess longstanding expertise or vested interest in waterworks operations and represent a diverse group of stakeholders. Members must be experts in the fields of water

treatment technologies, public health, water quality, economics, environmental science, public utilities, community development, or industry regulations. The WAC reviews and makes recommendations regarding the regulatory, policy, and legislative aspects of the Virginia Department of Health's authorities regarding waterworks and water supply policies and procedures, as well as ODW's programs.

During the reporting period, the WAC met on September 23, 2025, December 9, 2025, March 23, 2026, and June 18, 2026. The meetings are open to the public

8.5. Public Hearings

There were no public hearings relating to Waterworks Operator licensure regulations during this time period.

9.0 Program Review

9.1. Licensure Board Meetings

There were five board meetings held during the reporting period: August 4, 2025; October 23, 2025; January 8, 2026; March 31, 2026; and April 23, 2026.

9.2. Licensure Examination Review Committee

Since the transition to the ABC examination, this committee is no longer in use.

9.3. Education and Training Committee of the WWOOSSP Board

The Education and Training Committee met two times during the reporting period: October 23, 2025, and April 23, 2026. During these meetings, the Committee reviewed training program applications and recommended them for Board approval as well as reviewed existing approved courses for the purpose of updating the number of training credits permitted for experience requirement substitutions.

9.4. Internal Review

VDH conducted an internal review as part of the March 12, 2026, stakeholders meeting. VDH staff and the stakeholder advisory group members reviewed all areas of the Operator Certification program. Minutes from the meeting are provided as Attachment A.

9.5. Operator Certification Program External Review

As required by the Federal Guidelines, the External Review of the Operator Certification Program was completed in late June 2026. The review involved gathering information on the program from water operators in Virginia and evaluating its effectiveness. A staff member of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality conducted the review, prepared the report, and submitted it to VDH-ODW on June 18, 2026. The report is currently under review by VDH-ODW staff. The results will be included in the Governor's Report, which will be published later in 2026 and copied to the EPA.

Appendix A - Annual Operator Certification / Capacity Development Stakeholders Meeting

2026 Annual Operator Certification/Capacity Development Stakeholder Meeting
 March 12, 2026
 New River Valley Water Authority, Christiansburg, VA

Present: Jarrett Talley, Julie Floyd, Sarah Rowe, Lee Strickland (ODW); Lucas Kintz, Karen Hager (VT); Kelsey Brooks (UMD-EFC); Andy Koester (Moonshot Missions); Kai Daniel (Maryland Dept. of the Environment); Bob Canova (Va Western Community College); Caleb Taylor (NRVWA & VT); Donna Lawson (VRWA); Joey Hiner (SERCAP)

Absent: DPOR, Virginia Section AWWA, Mountain Empire Community College

Start time: 10:00 AM

Presenter	Agenda Item	Discussion	Action Items
All	Introductions		
Jarrett Talley, TCDO Division Director	Welcome and Overview	Funding and Budget • Federal DWSRF funding is decreasing, with a significant funding cliff expected in 2027. • Currently spending from 2023 funds; 2026 awards are expected soon, but 2027 funding remains uncertain. • ODW may shift staff to state funding if federal support is reduced. Key Updates from the Last Year • Barry Matthews retired as TCDO Director in August 2025. • Richmond Water Crisis: Five-day outage in 2025 prompted internal improvements. Richmond has since strengthened management practices and made plant improvements. Work continues on WBOP. • Two-Hour Reporting Law (effective July 2025): Approximately 160 reports submitted; about half were noncritical. No NOVs issued. • State Infrastructure Funding: – \$25M allocated in 2025 for upgrades in Greene County, Bowling Green, and Fauquier. – Proposed \$50M in the 2026 budget to continue supporting infrastructure, helping offset declining federal dollars. – State currently has a \$3.5B budget surplus. • FCAP: Federal shutdowns in 2025 delayed last year's process; initial offers are now being issued. FCAP 2026 applications are due August 7.	

		• Set-Aside Applications: Applications are due August 7, 2026. • ADA Compliance: Website updates are underway. Goal is full ADA compliance by April 26, 2026. • External Review of Operator Certification Program: Required every six years. The process involves surveying licensed operators and compiling findings. JT plans to ask Wayne Staples (DEQ) to conduct the review; additional help may be requested if needed.	Set-aside applications: Due August 7, 2026.
Julie Floyd, ODW Operator Certification & Training Manager	Operator Certification & Training Overview	See attached report Summary: • ODW continued strengthening Virginia’s operator certification and training programs in 2025–2026. Key 2026 contracts were renewed or updated with Virginia Tech, Mountain Empire Community College, and Virginia AWWA, with improvements focused on program structure, accessibility, and expanded course delivery. • Training offerings were refreshed, including updates to the managerial-focused courses. ODW continued support for the VT Water Operator Short School. Technical webinars hosted by ODW reached more than 1,700 registrants and included the introduction of Contact Hour certificates. Licensing resources were streamlined on the ODW website, and the monthly newsletter broadened operator engagement. • ODW remained active on external committees, including Virginia AWWA’s Education Committee and the Water Equity Taskforce. • Waterworks Operator Licensure renewals in early 2025 showed an initial dip but rebounded over the year. • Staff development included EPA training, VDH orientations, and conference participation, with expanded attendance planned for 2026. • Work continues to ensure all website materials meet ADA compliance standards.	

Sarah Rowe, ODW Capacity Development Supervisor	Capacity Development Update	See attached report Summary: • Capacity Development has 2 vacancies that will post soon: NC Coordinator and Western Coordinator; expected to be filled by May, with an updated service map to follow. • Grant funding progress included eight Planning & Design projects awarded, four additional ARPA-supported projects, and expectations of 10–11 projects funded in 2025. Small Projects funding supported 10 projects, and the Equitable Access to Drinking Water Fund included work with Hearn's MHP. • DWSRF application review included 30 applications and additional 10 Helene-related funding considerations. • The annual report to EPA has been submitted and is awaiting approval. • The redesigned ODW website is live, and staff are actively updating all online documents to meet new ADA compliance requirements that took effect at the end of 2025. Of 1,351 documents, approximately 300 require updates, with around 1,000 slated for archival or removal. • Discussion included how TMF factors into DWSRF application evaluation. Existing TMF review sheets contain limited information, and multiple partners (VDH, SERCAP, RCAP, EFC) are coordinating on a combined form. Note that VRA handles the credit checks. Additional tools such as the Triennial Assessment were mentioned as useful references.	• Sarah will send the TMF review sheet to Andy (Moonshot). • Sarah will send the Triennial Assessment questions and data to the group. • Sarah will provide updated coordinator map once vacancies are filled (target: May).
Julie Floyd	Review of Last Year's Action Items	• Jarrett to follow up with Rosa Lee about Louisa County technical school and waterworks operator classes – MAKING PROGRESS; GETTING CURRICULUM AND MARKETING TOGETHER, CONNECTING LOUISA COUNTY AND MECC • Stephanie to look into where people are taking their remotely proctored exams (e.g. home, libraries) and follow up with Julie- SEE DPOR REPORT; MANY STUDENTS TAKING REMOTE PROCTORED EXAMS • Barry to find what board positions are open in DPOR and distribute that information – (CALEB) NO NEW OPENINGS AT DPOR. OPERATORS CAN ATTEND DPOR MEETINGS TO GET CEU'S. • Stephanie to double-check the number of waterworks operators per class listed in the handout. Barry thinks the order may be reversed – THE ORDER WAS CORRECT	

		• Julie to work more with DPOR in coming year for operator licensure – IN PROGRESS • Julie and AWWA to work together on scholarships to sponsor people going to short school as AWWA has available funds – IN PROGRESS, JULIE WORKING WITH CYNTHIA • Bob will send Julie info on his course to put on ODW Website- DONE, ADDED TO WEBSITE • Julie will reach out to find out if the CCR iWriter is supported by EPA – IT IS • Joey to follow up with Barry and Lance about WIIN funding for connection to public systems – NO PROGRESS; BEING USED BY OEHS TO DRILL PRIVATE WELLS • Jarrett and Barry to follow up with Joey about using public connection funding for Smithfield and SUS – IN PROGRESS	
All Stakeholders	Stakeholder Reports		
Kelsey Brooks	UMD-EFC Program Manager	See attached report Summary: • Quantified Ventures was noted as a partner that includes former SRF managers and provides financial support. A meeting will be scheduled with Kelsey to discuss the types of technical assistance EPA can offer, since waterworks have had difficulty accessing that support. • The Town of Iron Gate recently received a work plan for a rate study, and Kelsey will share that plan along with existing rate studies for Montross and Bowling Green. EFC is convening a focus group of successful SRF borrowers to share best practices and is seeking referrals from TCDO for waterworks that may be interested. • EFCN and Moonshot Missions are available to review RFPs. They expressed a need for referrals and information on barriers and successes related to SRF funding, as they are forming a focus group to gather this input. • Discussion included Helene and Milton funding, with EPA holding \$12 million across a broad list of eligible activities. When systems are referred, EPA often asks what VDH has already done to support them. Similar questions arise regarding regular technical assistance funding. JT will share	• Kelsey will send Sarah the work plan for Iron Gate. • JT, SR, and Kelsey will meet to discuss EPA technical assistance in Virginia and how to improve coordination and outcomes. • JT will send the information he has from EPA regarding federal funding

		available information from EPA regarding how federal funding is being routed to waterworks. There is ongoing confusion about the flow of funds, and it is unclear whether any funding has reached systems despite outreach attempts by SERCAP.	and its distribution.
Andy Keoster	Moonshot Missions, Managing Director	See attached report Summary: • As a national EFC, Moonshot is able to assist communities of all sizes, while their Small Drinking Water Systems grant applies only to systems serving under 10,000 people. • They requested water loss data to help target assistance and expressed interest in supporting water loss and water audit work, as well as water leak rebate efforts. • They can also assist utilities in implementing Asset Management Plans. • EFC noted interest in AI integration for waterworks. Discussion covered situations in which companies, including data centers, may invest in water loss projects to earn water credits for ESG requirements or through Volumetric Water Benefit Accounting. Some communities have asked data centers to build their own water systems and extend service to nearby homes. • Moonshot and the EFC are looking for systems to support and are working to bring more technology sector investment into local water projects.	• Capacity Development will work with Moonshot to identify waterworks needing water loss and water audit assistance. • CapDev will work with Moonshot to identify waterworks needing Asset Management assistance.
Donna Lawson	Water Training Specialist, Virginia Rural Water Association	See attached report Summary: • Donna reviewed staffing updates within the organization, including key personnel involved in training, wastewater, financial support, and program leadership. • The Circuit Rider program continues to support utilities, with staff covering large territories and assisting both member and non-member systems—primarily those serving populations under 3,000. Services include leak detection, technical assistance, water loss audits, operator training, rate studies, and publication of the quarterly <i>Streamline</i> magazine. VRWA also works closely with VAWARN. • Several upcoming events were noted: Annual Conference in Roanoke, the Leadership Conference in August, and the fall Expo in Augusta.	• Julie will follow up with Donna (and DPOR) on what resources are available for Class 5 and 6 waterworks

		• Free EPA-funded training remains available, with additional online options through Suncoast. • VRWA received set-aside funds for four new leak detection units. • Staff participate in two national conferences annually, in addition to hosting their own events. • The organization discussed apprenticeship efforts. While a state approved apprenticeship program faced challenges due to national restrictions, collaboration with JobCorps in Coeburn remains active. JobCorps serves young adults needing support and provides career pathways, including water sector opportunities. A student previously placed through JobCorps has successfully entered the profession. Additional examples from Camden, NJ illustrated how JobCorps can support green infrastructure and wastewater workforce needs.	
Joey Hiner	State Lead, SERCAP	• Joey reviewed current SERCAP activities, noting 42 active projects across water, wastewater, stormwater, and administrative support areas. Several projects span multiple sectors, including GIS work for Bowling Green and SCADA-related work in Victoria. • EF&C funding remains available until fully spent, after which utilities are placed on a waiting list. • Some activity has rebounded following the federal slowdown, though on-site visits were impacted. Additional funding has been sourced through local grants, including a Virginia Ecological Endowment grant supporting septic cleanouts and well assessments in Franklin and Pittsylvania counties. • Communities continue to request income surveys, and SERCAP is also conducting smoke testing on wastewater systems. • TAP positions are mostly filled, with three positions active in Virginia and one shared with another state; one remote position remains open. • Asset management services continue to be offered. • Training needs and opportunities were discussed, including identifying locations for future training events. Upcoming work includes a Water Audit Training in North Carolina in partnership with Cavanaugh Associates, and workforce related training through funding obtained with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. • A brief mention was made of economic impacts from data centers and the RCAP Fly In.	• Joey will coordinate with Julie to schedule an in-person Water Audit Training. • Group: Provide Joey with potential locations for additional trainings.

Bob Canova	Adjunct Professor, Virginia Western Community College	• Bob discussed ongoing issues with course communication, noting that emails are being routed to spam, which is affecting class advertising efforts. • The course, offered through Workforce Development at Virginia Western Community College, includes weekly homework, practice assignments, a final practice exam, and proctored math components designed to mirror certification exam expectations. The curriculum is organized by treatment process.	• Julie will include info for the course in the ODW newsletter - DONE & INCLUDED IN MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER • Bob will send ODW materials about the course for posting on the website - DONE & POSTED ON WEBSITE
Caleb Taylor	VT Water Program Lead	See attached report Summary: • Caleb reviewed the training program activity, noting an overall uptick in enrollment for the Broadcast series, which is improving the fill rate. An overview was provided on budgeted course seats versus actual attendance, and feedback continues to be positive. • Recent highlights include Dr. Krometis' February Broadcast, which drew over 300 attendees, and the March Broadcast focused on water audits. • For the Short School, 120 participants were budgeted for 2025, with 72 attending. The DPOR exam has been removed from the end-of-week schedule. Wastewater curriculum revisions are underway, and water instructors are refreshing slide materials. The next Water Operator Short School will be held in June 2026. • Planning is underway for a 2026 exam prep video series covering licensing exam topics. This series may include asynchronous cohort participation and office hours facilitated by Caleb.	

		• Course understanding metrics show improvement across all classes. • The first class of the year sold out, and the Virginia Beach OMDS course has a waitlist. A Physical and Cyber Security class is scheduled in Winchester during the first week of April. The 2025 revamp of the MMM and ESSW courses shifted instruction from lecture-heavy to more conversational and discussion-based approaches, incorporating practical examples such as WBOP, rates, and CIP.	
Review of Submitted Reports	Various	Review of DPOR Report (Floyd) Regulations that took effect in January reduced the required experience for initial licensure. DPOR’s audit process uses 5% of the regulant base to verify contact hours, but due to low response rates and the extensive follow-up required, the cost to complete the audit would exceed the agency’s budget. As a result, the Board has begun the process of requiring CPE/CEU documentation to be submitted with all renewals. DPOR may add functionality that allows licensees to upload documentation directly, similar to other boards. A question was raised regarding adding a checkbox during renewal for operators interested in freelance operating to help match operators to needs. Caleb will discuss this idea with Marjorie. Review of Virginia Section American Waterworks Association (Canova) Section 4 is participating in Work for Water initiatives. At WaterJAM, the committee will focus on informing members about job fairs, especially smaller events, using Virginia Works as the primary advertising outlet. Regarding VAWARN, it was noted that if a waterworks is not a member but experiences an issue, Geneva will still distribute the request for assistance and handle the paperwork afterward. Review of WaterFX Report (Rowe) WaterFX is a national organization not yet operating in Virginia but exploring opportunities in the state. They offer a broad scope of services and use complex methods to secure funding for waterworks needs, including assistance with procurement. Josh Clement, based in Baltimore, is a point of contact. WaterFX can work with systems serving populations up to 20,000.	

		Review of Mountain Empire Community College Report (Floyd) The Mountain Empire Community College signed a new contract this year. The program will have a new staff member to help with enrollment and retention. MECC is also working on converting their material to be ADA II compliant. A question was raised regarding advertising of VCCC courses. Bob reported that he has not seen any information at Virginia Western about the courses.	
Open Discussion		Topic 1: Moonshot – Data Centers and Data Tools • Rodney Newton is involved in a pilot project exploring the use of mobile phones to scan paper records and build a custom GPT tool to convert paper documents into electronic format and provide automated analysis. • Discussion included: How can we support waterworks in moving from no cellphone use to using cellphones, and from no AI use to effective AI adoption? • Rodney has a white paper describing this approach. • Example referenced: “Ask Gerry” system in Georgia. This system compiles large datasets, integrates them into ChatGPT, includes scanned records, and allows staff to ask questions such as: “How should I handle this situation?” • NSF Effort: South Carolina partnership between the state and “Delta Bravo,” with VDH adding tools to support operators in completing reporting. Topic 2: DPOR Regulation Change – Contact Hours • DPOR is proposing a change in regulations that would require documentation of Contact Hours when individuals apply for renewal. • This requirement is currently in the proposal stage.	• Andy will share the white paper about using AI for collecting and synthesizing data.

Adjourned