

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT OPERATOR
CERTIFICATION PROCESSING TIMES FOR THE
2000 CALENDAR YEAR

Pursuant to Government Code Section 15378

Prepared by

State Water Resources Control Board

Summary

Section 15378 of the California Government code requires the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), among other state agencies, to report annually by January 31, on how long it takes to process specified permits. The only SWRCB program subject to this requirement is the Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification Program. A review of a sample of applications showed that the SWRCB certified wastewater treatment plant operators in a 1-day minimum, with 8 day median, and a maximum of 35 days. The SWRCB will work to further reduce the time.

Annual Report Requirements

Section 15378 provides that the annual report shall include:

- (1) The time periods required by the chapter for each permit issued by their agency, specifying any modifications or additions.
- (2) The minimum, median and maximum times for processing permits, from receipt of the initial application to the final permit decision, for each permit issued by their agency.
- (3) A description of the appeal process required by this chapter and a summary of the number and disposition of appeals received by the secretary or agency head during the preceding year.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Certification Program

A wastewater treatment plant uses a series of physical and chemical processes to remove pollutants from wastewater from a home, business, community or industry. The effective operation of a wastewater treatment plant depends on the operators. The Wastewater Treatment Plant Certification Program protects public health and the environment by making sure only qualified and certified plant operators work at wastewater treatment plants. Only people certified by the SWRCB may operate a publicly owned plant or one privately owned and regulated by the Public Utilities Commission.

Regulatory Deadlines

Existing law, Chapter 9 of Division 7 of the Water Code, beginning with Section 13625, regulates the qualifications, applications, certification and the appeals process for wastewater treatment plant operators. Existing regulations, Chapter 26 of Title 23, California Code of Regulations, require the SWRCB to either notify the applicant in writing within 30 days after receipt of an application that the application is complete and accepted for filing, or that the

application is incomplete and what information is required to complete the application. The SWRCB must issue the certification within 30 days after receiving a complete application and the fee.

Certification Processing

The SWRCB sampled 286 of the 617 applications for certificates processed in 2000. The SWRCB calculated the minimum, median and maximum number of days to process a complete application and issue a certificate.

	<u>Number of Calendar Days</u>
Minimum	1 Calendar Day
Median	8 Calendar Days
Maximum	35 Calendar Days

Appeal Process

Applicants may appeal certificate processing times greater than 30 days through the program's existing appeal regulations. No one appealed certification processing times greater than 30 days.

Conclusion

In 2000, the SWRCB made a significant reduction in the median and maximum time required to process applications. Average processing times were reduced by 10 days and the maximum was reduced by 9 days. It should be noted that of the 286 applications sampled, only 6 exceeded the 30-day deadline.

In the 1999 Annual Report, the SWRCB anticipated that use of a new database would streamline much of the record keeping and generation of certificates. This has proven to be the case. The SWRCB will continue to examine ways to further reduce processing times in 2001.