



California Water Environment Association Re-Certification Policy Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Section 1: Certificate Renewal

What if I have earned the proper contact hours, but was not able to turn them in before the re-certification deadline?

You may turn-in your Contact Hours and fees up to one year after they are due. However, your Contact Hours must be earned during the two years prior to the certificate renewal due date, and penalty fees may be applied. (Sections 1.2 and 1.3)

Section 2: Continuing Education Requirement

Can I earn Contact Hours after the renewal date for a certificate that has not been renewed (re-certified)?

No. All Contact Hours must be made within the two years before the certificate re-certification date. If you do not have all of the Contact Hours by the re-certification date, then you can only re-certify by re-testing and passing the test—even if you have some Contact Hours already earned. Don't let this happen to you. (Section 2.2)

When can I start earning Contact Hours?

No sooner than 2 years before your contact hours are due. You cannot apply contact hours more than two years old to any certificate. (Section 2.2)

Why are 12 Contact Hours required every two years?

After passing the test, certificates holders need a way to help show that they are still competent and learning in the field. Documenting training helps to do this as the profession and industry changes. 12 Contact Hours translates into 1 day of training per year. It is likely that most wastewater professionals already receive this amount of training every year either through on the job training, self-study, or other outside training events. (See Section 2.3)

Can Contact Hours be applied to more than one certificate?

Yes, as long as the Contact Hours are relevant to each vocation. (Section 2.5)

Section 3: Definition of Continuing Education Contact Hours

How much credit will be given for a full day at a conference?

A full day usually consists of about 300 minutes of instruction and would count as 6 contact hours (1 Contact Hour = 50 minutes). A half-day would usually count as 3 Contact Hours. (Section 3)

If CWEA Conference sessions are usually 2 hours and 35 minutes long, how many Contact Hours can I earn per session?

Sessions usually consist of 3 or 4 presentations and last a half of a day (either a morning or afternoon for about 2.5 to 3 hours). Typical sessions (or half days) will be awarded 3 Contact Hours. This is similar to SWRCB's Continuing Education Point (CEP) System where a single session is awarded 0.3 CEPs. (Section 3)

How many Contact Hours (CEUs) are there in a Continuing Education Unit?

There are 10 Contact Hours in a standard Continuing Education Unit. If you take a self-study course, and earn 4 CEUs then you have earned 40 Contact Hours. The California State Water Resources Control Board uses Continuing Education Points (CEPs). Each CEP is worth 10 Contact Hours. Some organizations issue what they call "CEUs", but they are not the standard 10-Contact Hour CEU as defined by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET). Each of these "CEUs" may be less than the standard IACET CEU. (Section 3)

Section 4: Methods of Earning Continuing Education Contact Hours

Does membership on a committee count toward Contact Hours?

Generally, no. However, if it can be shown that committee activities are the equivalent of one of the ways that Contact Hours can be earned, then it will be considered. (Section 4)

Can Contact Hours be earned by attending non-CWEA training?

Yes. Any training is acceptable as long as it is relevant to the vocation(s), meets the guidelines in Section 6, and is pre-approved by CWEA. (Section 4)

Why do trainers and instructors get 2 Contact Hours for every hour they teach?

Because for every hour of teaching at least one additional hour will probably be spent in preparation. (Section 4.2)

To earn Contact Hour credit for a CWEA conference session, do I have to stay in the same session, or can I move around from session to session?

Yes. You can move around, but you must complete the equivalent of a whole session to earn any Contact Hours. A single, half-day, session will usually give you 3 Contact Hours. (Section 4.3)

What if there is absolutely no way I can accumulate 12 contact hours in two years, is there a way to keep my certification?

Yes. You can always take the option of re-testing. When you re-test you pay all of the testing fees, but do not have to pay renewal fees, so the cost is not much different. You just have to pass the test. (Section 4.1)

Will Contact Hours be given for serving as a vocationalist?

Yes. The TCP Committee and staff will develop standards that will allow vocationalists and subject matter experts to earn contact hours for work on certification test development. See (Section 4.2)

If I take a management course, will it count toward my Contact Hours?

It might as long as it is relevant to your vocation. Most Grade III and IV certifications list management and supervision as part of the Essential Duties. (Section 4.3)

Can a person belong to 12 membership organizations to completely satisfy the Continuing Education Requirement?

No. A maximum of 6 Contact Hours are allowed for each 2-year renewal cycle. Only 1 Contact Hour per membership is allowed during the two year cycle. (Section 4.5)

Do I have to be a CWEA member to renew my certificate?

No, but members enjoy a discount and earn 1 Contact Hour per year for being a CWEA member. (Section 4.5)

Section 5: Contact Hour Record Keeping and Documentation

Can records verifying continuing education be in any format?

Yes, as long as they satisfy the criteria in Sections 5.3 to 5.5. (Section 5)

Do training providers have to keep records of trainees?

No, but CWEA recommends that they do if they are able. This will allow CWEA and the trainee to verify training if necessary. (Section 5.2)

Section 6: Educational/Training Course Approval
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Does CWEA now certify trainers or training programs?

No. CWEA simply verifies that training and educational programs are relevant to the vocation(s). (Section 6)

Is on-the-job training acceptable for Contact Hours?

Yes. Any training is acceptable as long as it is relevant to the vocation(s), meets the guidelines in Section 6, and is pre-approved by CWEA. (Section 6.1)

What if I participate in a 20-minute safety training every week—will that count toward my Contact Hours?

Training that consists of a series of short, topic-related, sessions can be lumped together into one single session. The trainer should put the whole program together and document it so that it is a single training program. Contact Hours will not be given for a training program that totals less than 50 minutes. The training must be relevant to the vocation and approved by CWEA. (Section 6.1)

Can certificate holders get a course or training program approved themselves?

No. Only the trainer or training organization can seek approval of the training program. This policy is intended to prevent a confusing flood of paperwork from different sources about a training event. CWEA will make all forms and instructions for course approval available to anybody (on the cwea.org, etc). If you want a course approved, and the trainer has not applied for CWEA approval, then you may want to give them the paperwork and encourage them to apply for approval. (Section 6.2)

Who approves educational/training programs?

CWEA has the responsibility of ensuring that training programs address the Essential Duties of the vocation. Thus, CWEA has the ultimate authority for determining whether a training program is acceptable for Contact Hours or not. (Section 6.3)