



GUIDELINE 33 – SOLID WASTE OPERATOR CERTIFICATION CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM

North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality - Division of Waste Management
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North Dakota Administrative Code (NDAC) Chapter 33.1-20-16 specifies that permittees of all municipal waste landfills, municipal waste incinerators, municipal solid waste ash landfills, and special waste landfills which accept primarily oilfield special waste or TENORM waste in North Dakota must have a certified operator on site at all times during operation of the facility. Permittees of all industrial waste landfills and special waste landfills which accept primarily coal combustion residuals in North Dakota are required to have at least one certified operator whose primary work location is at the facility.

In order to be certified, an applicant must have at least one year's operational experience and must take and pass a written examination given by the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (Department) or its authorized representative. The Department offers annual training sessions for operators.

Some operators who have repeatedly taken the training course and passed the test have been interested in other ways of obtaining training to comply with the state requirements. NDAC Chapter 33.1-20-16 does allow the Department to approve other training and certification procedures if the Department finds that the training and certification are substantially equivalent.

The Department allows operators to use continuing education credits to meet the training and certification requirement. To be eligible for the continuing education program, an operator must have attended the state's formal training program and successfully completed the examination **at least twice**. Thereafter, the Department will allow a certified operator to be certified through other approved training courses **every other certification period**. Since certificates are valid for a 3-year period, the state's formal training program and certification test would need to be taken only every 6 years; however, the operator must obtain at least eighteen (18) Continuing Education Credits (CECs) during the first 3-year period and six (6) CECs during the second 3-year period from their last formal North Dakota training program.

The operator must provide documentation that they attended a continuing education event and must have written verification from an instructor or other responsible person for the training activity documenting that they attended said training. For most events of a technical nature, one CEC will be given for each hour of formal technical training or education.

Approval of continuing education credits and training programs is solely at the discretion of Departmental training personnel. The topics should cover a wide range of waste issues and avoid simple repetition of topics. To obtain CECs, the landfill operator must:

- (1) Keep a general description of the event (such as a brief course outline or program describing the training event) and any handouts. This information could be kept in a separate folder or within the operator training manual.

- (2) Have a training log form (see attached sheet) that **must be signed by the trainer, moderator, or Departmental employee** at each specific event. To be certified, the operator must provide the Department with documentation showing the name of the event, the topics covered, the place the training was taken, the date, the hours the training was conducted, and the signature and phone number of the trainer or moderator of the event.
- (3) Have available for review any course description, handouts, manuals, training information, etc.

The Department reserves the right to reject any training that is not well documented or which is not approved. The Department will determine how much credit will be given for training events. The Department reserves the right to alter, modify or discontinue the CEC Program at any time. Any information that significantly conflicts with state law or rules should not be followed.

Participation in the CEC Program is still contingent upon submission by the applicant of all certification fees and annual renewal fees and is still subject to all the other requirements of NDAC Chapter 33.1-20-16 regarding Certification of Operators. Questions regarding the program should be directed to the Division of Waste Management's staff at 701-328-5166.

(Attachment: Continuing Education Credit Log)

