



Water and Wastewater Operator Certification

Mentorship Program Policy

Introduction

Most organizations acknowledge the benefit of having internal employee development plans. This mentoring program is aimed at connecting the entire water and wastewater industry across Alberta, which will lead to increased collaboration and an overall province wide industry culture that promotes knowledge transfer and succession planning.

Alberta Environment and Park (AEP) mentorship program is dedicated to connecting junior/beginner water and wastewater operators with senior/experienced water and wastewater operators to assist in the navigation of obtaining/maintaining certification from Alberta Environment and Parks, Certification Section. Gaining a solid understanding of the Certification Guidelines can seem like a daunting task starting out in the industry. Having this solid understanding of the Certification Guidelines and subsequent administrative processes early on in the operator's work experience sets the tone of collaboration and teamwork for thoughtful career decision making.

Mentoring is a voluntary relationship in which a mentor and mentee work together to facilitate the growth of the mentee, based on an honest two-way communication. It is not a strategy to find employment, nor for the mentor to solve the mentees problems. This is an opportunity for the Mentor to impart their wisdom and experience in navigating the Operator Certification Program and build relationships within the industry. All costs incurred will be expected to be covered by the each party, AEP will not responsible for travel, time or incidental costs.

Role of Mentor

- To have an in depth understanding of the administration of Operator Certification Program in AB (training will be provided by Certification staff to assist with this).
- Be able to listen to concerns (confidentially) of the mentee about aspects of the certification program that are confusing so clarification and guidance can be given.
- Work with the Mentee to understand their goals with respect to certification and help shape those goals by developing action strategies, action plan worksheets and forms will be provided by AEP.
- Provide honest and constructive feedback in an unbiased and supportive way.
- When the mentoring partnership is over, communicate that to the Mentee and the AEP Coordinator.

Benefits

- Leadership development
- Sharing and knowledge transfer
- Supports certification standards and industry reputation
- Personal satisfaction
- Increased engagement

Role of Mentee

- Communicate with the Mentor in an open and honest way about concerns, opinions, and perceived barriers.
- Be prepared for meetings with questions and updates from previous meeting.
- Touch base on a regular basis with the Mentor to keep the connection current throughout the partnership.
- When the mentoring partnership is over, communicate that to the Mentor and the Alberta Environment Parks (AEP) Coordinator.

Benefits

- Building relationships by understanding yourself and others
- Sharing and knowledge transfer
- Defining development goals
- Health benefits of strong social networks
- Reduced stress and anxiety

Mentoring Process

The Operator Certification Program will maintain a list of mentors who have volunteered to be part of this program. Each mentor will have undergone training provided by Certification staff. Once an application has been received by a Mentee, the AEP Coordinator will look at the information provided and establish the best match possible.

At that time, the Mentor and Mentee will be notified with each other's contact information and it's then up to the Mentor to develop a path forward for the first meeting. The first contact is expected to be made within two weeks from the initial notice of the match. Every six months, the Mentor is required to check in with their AEP Coordinator with an update on how the match is going.

Mentors will be provided with 3 hours of training scheduled on as needed basis (no cost for training). All incidental costs to attend training will not be reimbursed by Alberta Environment and Parks. There will be no cost for training

- Mentoring Agreement
- Compliance 365
- Presentation - FAQ Sheets/Decision Making Process for Certification
- Review Work Sheets

During the 1st Meeting the Mentee/Mentor should consider sharing the following:

- Interests both at work and out of work
- Education and experience history
- Current work status
- Ideal position
- What you hope to gain from the partnership (expectations)
- Develop future meeting schedule

Action Plan/Strategies

The Certification Section has developed a template action plan that can be filled out and maintained by the Mentee. Worksheets have been provided that can be used to help in understanding the timing /experience/education requirements to move up through certification levels.

A large component to being a certified operator is maintaining certification. Operators are required to renew their certification every three years by demonstrating a minimum requirement of applicable work experience and completing continuing education units (CEUs). An action plan template is available to help the Mentor and mentee work out a course completion plan.

Agreement and Confidentiality

Mentors and Mentees will need to agree to keep all conversations/correspondence confidential. Both parties are expected to sign an agreement which will be kept on file with Alberta Environment and Parks Certification Program.

Ending the Mentorship

Mentoring relationships depend on trust as well open and honest two-way communication. If a mentorship partnership doesn't feel like a good fit, please let the AEP Coordinator know and a new match can be set up. If the partnership is ending because the mentoring process was a success, please let the AEP Coordinator know so the file can be closed.