

Arkansas Water Operator Licensing/COVID-19: Arkansas Department of Health Announces Training Hours Waiver



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Mr. Jeff Stone, P.E., of the Arkansas Department of Health (“DOH”), announced in an article in the Fall 2020 edition of the publication Arkansas Drinking Water Update that:

... Due to the effects of the pandemic upon the availability of water operator training, the requirement of obtaining training hours for the renewal of water operator licenses for the current 2-year period has been waived.

Mr. Stone serves as the Director of the Engineering Section of DOH.

The DOH rules pertaining to water operator licensing require that during each license renewal period operators obtain 24 hours of training for license renewal. The current 2-year renewal period is stated to end June 30, 2021.

Mr. Stone notes that Arkansas operators typically obtain most of their required renewal hours at four conferences, which include:

- Arkansas Water Works and Water Environment Association conference
- Arkansas Rural Water Association conference
- Southwest Section AWWA conference
- Arkansas Water & Wastewater Managers Association conference

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the cancellation of each of these conferences. Mr. Stone states that the cancellation of such conferences has resulted in most water operators having “no practical way to obtain the required training hours during the pandemic.”

Consequently, DOH and the Arkansas Drinking Water Advisory and Operator Licensing Committee undertook action pursuant to Public Health Emergency Regulatory Suspensions under Executive Order 20-06 and 20-16 which provides under the relevant rules:

The 24-hours of renewal training instruction for the two-year period of July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020, is waived. No continuing education (renewal training) will be required to renew Water Treatment Licenses, Water Distribution Licenses or Very Small Water System operator licenses.

Mr. Stone’s article provides background as to the rationale for this decision and procedures for submitting renewal applications, along with providing additional information.

A copy of the article can be downloaded [here](#).