Certified Installer Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (CIOWTS) Credentialing Handbook

Guide to Policies and Procedures For the CIOWTS Credentialing Program

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IOWWA'S Mission is *"to advance the environmental health and protection professional for the purpose of providing a healthful environment for all."*

In pursuit of its mission, IOWWA sponsors a credentialing program: The Certified Installer Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (CIOWTS) – Basic and Advanced Levels.

Congratulations on taking a step towards becoming credentialed. Holding a credential benefits not only you as an individual in proving your competency and capability in the field of onsite installation, but also benefits the community and employers. It is through the device of a credential that a community gains assurance that the workforce handling this responsibility is competent, properly trained, and equipped to carry out their responsibilities. The credential serves to verify that a professional has achieved what is perceived as a baseline level of competence. By having credentialed people on their staff, employers are assured of having a workforce of employees that are reasonably capable of handling whatever challenges their job responsibilities and their employer present.

Description of CIOWTS Credential

Certified Installer Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (CIOWTS) Basic and Advanced Levels.

The CIOWTS credential is designed to test the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for the successful installation of an onsite wastewater treatment system. Since it is a national credential, and state and local codes are not covered, this credential is meant to enhance a state or local regulatory program. Nationally issued CIOWTS credential certificates are acknowledged in Iowa.

INTRODUCTION

Definition of Holding a CIOWTS Credential

Credentialing is a process by which a non-government agency validates, based upon predetermined standards, an individual's qualifications and knowledge for practice in onsite waste water system installations.

The CIOWTS credential, nationally recognized in scope, validates your specialized knowledge and experience, thus promoting the practice of onsite installation. Credentialed individuals are viewed as leaders, mentors, and role models in onsite of wastewater installation systems. Maintaining the CIOWTS credential keeps you up to date on the latest developments in this specialty and demonstrates your commitment to life-long learning.

Sponsorship/Administration

The credentialing program was originally developed by the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA). The Iowa Onsite Wastewater Association (IOWWA) owns and administers the CIOWTS credential to interested persons and groups in the onsite industry.

Membership Requirements

Membership in any association or organization, including IOWWA, is ***NOT*** required to participate in the CIOWTS credentialing program.

Non-Discrimination Policy

It is the policy of IOWWA that no individual shall be excluded from the opportunity to participate in the IOWWA credentialing program on the basis of ethnic origin, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability.

Name/Address Change

It is YOUR responsibility to notify IOWWA, via email or by phone of any change in your name and/or address. Without this information IOWWA is unable to send you important information on testing and maintaining your credential.

Contacting IOWWA –

The IOWWA corporate office:
Iowa Onsite Waste Water Association (IOWWA)
16027 Northpark Drive, Urbandale IA 50323
The IOWWA may be contacted by email, calling, written request, fax:
IOWWA
c/o Penny Andorf, Association Administrator
P.O. Box 322, Hudson IA 50643
Ph: 515-225-1051 Fax: 1-480-802-6643
Email: penny@iowwa.com

Credentialing Exam and Application Procedures

Examination Standards

IOWWA is committed to offering fair, valid and reliable credentialing examinations. A **fair** examination is not biased for or against any groups because of ethnic background, geographic locale or any other demographic criterion. A **valid** examination accurately reflects the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent practice. All questions appearing on the examinations have been validated using accepted psychometric practices. **Reliability** means the examination is consistent in its measurements of the knowledge, skills and abilities of competent practice. Each examination question is evaluated on a regular basis for reliability, fairness, and validity. Each examination question has been verified for accuracy and reliability and referenced to a published source.

Application Procedures

Applicants applying for the CIOWTS credential must complete the ***Application for Certified Installer Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems***. This application can be obtained through the following methods:

1. Downloaded from IOWWA's website at www.iowwa.com/pages/certification
2. Email penny@iowwa.com to have the application emailed, faxed or mailed
3. Through written request and mailed to IOWWA, P.O. Box 322 Hudson, IA 50643

Eligibility to sit for the CIOWTS credentialing examination is determined by IOWWA or through means of a signed and binding contract with other states, entities or industry associations.

Once your completed application is received and reviewed you will receive one of the following notifications: a confirmation letter (indicating you are eligible to take the credentialing test), an incomplete letter (stating your application is incomplete with reasons listed), or a denial letter (indicating you are not eligible to take the exam with explanation) via email or US mail.

Fees

All application and examination fees are detailed on the CIOWTS application. Membership in any agency or association is NOT required to take the CIOWTS test.

Examination Procedures

Exam Security - The CIOWTS examinations are the exclusive property of IOWWA. Candidates who take the CIOWTS examination acknowledge that they understand the following:

1. Federal copyright law protects the examination and questions contained therein. No part of the examination may be copied or reproduced in part or whole by any means whatsoever, including memorization.
2. The theft or attempted theft of an examination booklet is punishable as a felony.
3. Candidate participation in any irregularity occurring during the examination such as giving or obtaining unauthorized information or aid, as evidenced by observation or subsequent statistical analysis, may be sufficient cause to terminate the candidate's participation, invalidate the results of the candidate's examination, or take other appropriate action deemed necessary.

Examination Scheduling/Rescheduling/Cancellation Fees

IOWWA will process, renew and hold the credential for individuals who test through IOWWA. Applicants who test through another entity, state, or association will have the credential processed, renewed and held as per an established binding contract with said entity, state, or association. When scheduling a paper and pencil examination, failure to show up at the scheduled time and location may result in the forfeiture of all examination fees.

Examination Results

IOWWA will release examination results by email or mail within a reasonable time following the examination date but no longer than 4 weeks.

Credentialing documents are mailed or emailed to individuals who pass the exam. The documentation includes the notification of examination results, wall certificate, wallet card, IOWWA Code of Ethics, and continuing education information.

Re-test Process:

1. Applicant is notified, by letter or email, following the test explaining that they failed and will include a CIOWTS Application Test Re-take form. To re-take the examination the Exam Retake Fee (same as original test fee) must be paid.
2. Applicants must wait until the next scheduled exam before retaking an exam, though there may be circumstances where the wait period will be reviewed.
3. There is no limit on the number of times someone can take an exam.

Credentialing Period and Continuing Education

Credential Cycle - The CIOWTS runs on a two-year cycle. The first day of your credential cycle is the first day of the month *you passed* the exam. For example, if you took an exam on Nov. 9, 2016 your credential period would begin on Nov. 1, 2016 and end on Oct. 31, 2018.

Credential Renewal – Credentialed individuals will receive via email/mail a renewal invoice prior to the end of the two-year credential cycle with information detailing the renewal fees and required continuing education status. CIOWTS credentialed individuals must submit the appropriate number of contact hours and the appropriate renewal fees postmarked no later than the credential expiration date.

Continuing Education Contact Hours - Part of maintaining and renewing the CIOWTS credential is the submission of approved Continuing Education hours (CE) within the two year-credential period. Credentialed individuals renewing through IOWWA must accumulate 12 contact hours during the two-year credential period**.** One (1) contact hour is equal to one (1) clock hour of class time.

Continuing Education Requirements

Content must relate to the onsite wastewater field. For continuing education, only actual time spent in education is allowed. Acceptable and pre-approved courses include but are not limited to; IOWWA approved workshops; IOWWA annual conference sessions as noted on the agenda; DMACC Onsite Wastewater Training Center workshops; NOWRA or any NOWRA State Affiliates, and any On-site Manufacturer. Other sources/venues may be approved by IOWWA on a case-by-case basis. If there are any questions whether an event is approved or wanting pre-approval of an event, contact IOWWA or email penny@iowwa.com.

IOWWA will accept up to 6.0 CE hours of on-line training per credential cycle unless special circumstances exist. Special circumstances will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and might include but are not limited to States of Emergency or pre-approved on-line courses advertising more than 6 CE hours per credential cycle. IOWWA will also allow for 2.0 CE hour per credential cycle (1.00 CE hour per year) for county contractor meetings. Only 2.0 CE hours will be allowed even if multiple county contractor meetings are attended.

IOWWA will track CE hours received from IOWWA and DMACC sponsored events for Credential Holders certified through IOWWA. IOWWA will try and coordinate with other entities hosting pre-approved workshops or courses to track CE hours; however, it is the responsibility of the credential holder to submit their hours.

1. Continuing Education (CE) hours must have pre-approval from IOWWA or the credential governing agency. The certificate of attendance or other form of continuing education validation showing CE hours received must be submitted to IOWWA or as established by the contracted governing agency.
2. Please keep copies of your CE submissions and supporting documentation for your records. If an individual cannot provide supporting documentation for a continuing education submission he/she will not be given credit for those hours.
3. If an individual fails to submit the appropriate renewal fees and/or falls short of meeting the minimum CE hour requirement for the credential, he/she will be entered into a grace period that can last for a period of up to 60 days from their credential expiration date.
4. Before the end of the grace period all appropriate fees and continuing education hours must be submitted in order to receive the "active" credential status.
5. If a credentialed individual fails to submit the appropriate fees and continuing education hours as outlined above, his/her credential is revoked. In order to re-obtain the credential the individual must reapply and retake the examination.

General Policies

Denial of Credential due to Ineligibility

It is the policy of IOWWA that no individual shall be excluded from the opportunity to participate in the credential program on the basis of ethnic origin, religion, sex, age or disability. A review and appeals process is available to individuals seeking an amendment of a decision denying eligibility to sit for an examination. The IOWWA Board of Directors conducts the review and appeals process. The decision of the Board is final. Failure of the credentialing examination is not subject for appeal.

Code of Ethics for Credentials Professionals

Credentialed individuals must acknowledge, accept and abide by the established Code of Ethics for CIOWTS credentialed professionals. All credentialed individuals must agree to and sign the statement below as part of the application submittal.

1. As long as my credential is in an active status, I shall endeavor to keep myself current and informed and satisfy any continuing education requirements that may be in effect for my credential.
2. I will respectfully represent my credentialed status and the credential itself to my professional peers, and to the public I serve.
3. In the course of performing my duties, I will conduct myself in a professional manner befitting of my credentialed status.
4. For the sake of elevating the recognition and status of my field, I will encourage my professional colleagues to consider earning this credential for themselves.
5. I will do nothing to undermine, detract from, or otherwise cause to develop any damaging associations with respect to this credential.

6. I accept that any activity on my part that will cause this credential any measure of injury serves as a breach and a failure on my part to uphold this code of ethics. Moreover, I accept that such action, for which I might be responsible, could result in the revocation of my credential.
7. I commit that my professional goal is to serve the community by doing whatever I am able to do in the course of carrying out my professional responsibilities to maintain and provide a healthful environment for all.

Revocation of Credential – Due to Misconduct

IOWWA reserves the right to revoke the credential of any individual holding a CIOWTS credential due to misconduct. The right to deny, revoke, or suspend a credential is vested in the IOWWA Board of Directors. All decisions shall be verified and upheld by IOWWA's Board of Directors. Prior to a credential being denied, revoked, or suspended the individual shall be notified by a personal phone call of the intent to invoke credential revocation. A letter will then be sent by certified US Mail with specific information concerning the charges that warrant such action. Any individual whose credential comes under review for denial, revocation, or suspension may submit a written appeal to the IOWWA Board of Directors within thirty (30) calendar days after notification of charges. Misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- Falsification of credential application.
- Falsification of any information requested by IOWWA.
- Failure to submit appropriate credential fees.
- Misrepresentation of credential status.
- Gross or repeated malpractice or negligence.
- Cheating or other irregularities related to the administration of an IOWWA examination.
- Revocation or suspension of their state credential (if applicable).
- Failure to maintain the confidentiality of credential examination questions or answer sheet.
- Limitation or sanction imposed by another professional organization relating to environmental health.
- Unauthorized possession of, use of or access to CIOWTS examinations, certificates, wallet identification cards, logos or IOWWA, the terms of the Certified Installer Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems, and abbreviations relating to these terms, and any other IOWWA documents and materials.
- Habitual use of alcohol, any drug or any substance, or any physical or mental condition which impairs competent and objective professional performance.
- Failure to report a known violation of the CIOWTS credential standards, policies or procedures.
- Violation of any provision of the Code of Ethics for CIOWTS Credentialed Professionals.
- The conviction or plea of guilty or plea of nolo contendre to a felony or misdemeanor related to environmental health.

Special Accommodations for Candidates with Disabilities or Impairments

IOWWA is committed to ensuring that no individual is deprived of the opportunity to take a credentialing examination solely by reason of a disability or impairment. IOWWA will try to make certain that any facility used for testing is fully accessible and compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). On the rare occasion that a facility might not be ADA compliant IOWWA will make special arrangements with any individual in need of accessibility.

To make a request for special accommodations, check the box on the CIOWTS test application. You must complete the CIOWTS *Exam Reasonable Accommodations Request.* If needed, IOWWA could request the specific diagnosis of your disability; medical records; or other written proof of the diagnosis by an appropriately licensed professional; and the type of accommodation being requested. Both forms must be returned at least 30 days prior to the scheduled test date. If the forms are not returned within 30 days prior to the scheduled test date your request for special accommodations may not be honored.

With respect to all matters related to testing accommodations, only communication with the candidate, professionals knowledgeable about the candidate's disability or impairment, and the candidate's authorized representative (if applicable) is allowed.

Active Military Duty

If a CIOWTS credential individual is deployed under active military duty a "temporary suspension" can be put on the credential until the individual returns from active duty. During this suspension the credential is *still active*, however the individual is not responsible for submitting renewal fees or continuing education hours. A request to suspend a credential for active military duty must be submitted in writing. Upon returning, the credential suspension would be lifted once a request is submitted along with discharge papers. For example, if the credential period is from 11/1/03-11/31/05 and the individual is deployed for active military duty on 4/1/04, once he/she returns they would have 18 months before the credential is set to expire.

CIOWTS Installer Credential and Continuing Education (CE) Grace Period – Under State of Emergency

In case of an extended state of emergency resulting in multiple workshop cancellations, IOWWA will adjust the existing "grace period" of 60 days, plus the time the state of emergency is enforced. This grace period will end when workshops can safely resume. Notifications will be provided when grace periods go into effect and end. This is intended to accommodate all credential holders who would be unable to attain CIOWTS continuing education hours training during this time. When circumstance become safe to once again resume travel to workshop classes, IOWWA will end the extended "grace period" date and resume the current 60-day grace period policy. For example, if the state of emergency persists for 4 months, the grace period would equal the 60 days, plus 4 months.

The credential renewal expiration date for all credential holders will remain the same. Renewal invoicing will continue based on your current credential cycle expiration date.

Application Withdrawal Policy

Withdrawal of a credentialing application after it has been submitted to IOWWA must be requested in writing to IOWWA. The application fee is non-refundable for all applications, including those found to be ineligible, no exceptions. **Written requests for refunds of examination fees will be honored only up to ninety (90) days after the fees have been processed by IOWWA.**

Basic Level and Advanced Level Test Information

Basic Level: The exam contains questions involving the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully install an onsite wastewater system. State and local codes are not covered. Passing score is 70% correct.

Advanced Level: The exam contains questions involving the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully install an onsite wastewater system. The questions contain more difficult scenarios that the basic level and require the test-taker to apply their knowledge to different situations. Passing score is 70% correct.