



EPA Requests Comments on Final Draft of Tribal Drinking Water Operator Certification Program Guidelines

Dear Tribal Environmental Director,

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is requesting comments on the Tribal Drinking Water Operator Certification Program Draft Final Guidelines (Draft Final Guidelines). The Notice of Availability of the Draft Final Guidelines will be published in the Federal Register in the next few weeks. The Federal Register Notice as well as a copy of the Draft Final Guidelines will be available on our website at www.epa.gov/safewater/tribal.html

This program is intended to provide additional certification and training opportunities for operators of water systems in Indian country. Currently, there is no requirement for operators in Indian Country to be certified. In order to improve environmental performance and protect public health, EPA has established program guidelines and baseline standards for operators and certification providers to follow. The program is voluntary, but, if a tribe receives funds from Drinking Water Infrastructure Grant Tribal Set-Aside (DWIG TSA) program, EPA will require the tribe to have, or agree to obtain within the project grant budget period, a certified operator(s) available to their drinking water system(s). This requirement will take effect once the guidelines are final.

The baseline standards for the program are as follows:

1. Classification of Systems, Facilities, and Operators
2. Operator Qualifications
3. Program Implementation
4. Certification Renewal
5. Re-certification
6. Stakeholder Involvement and Program Review
7. Certification Provider Requirements

The Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water published a first draft of these guidelines in the Federal Register on March 30, 2000 (65 FR 16917) and collected comments from tribes and other stakeholders. EPA is now seeking final comments on the program guidelines from tribes and other interested parties. A 60-day comment period will begin when the Notice of Availability of the Draft Final Guidelines is published in the Federal Register.

If you have any questions, please contact Jill Nogi, EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water, nogi.jill@epa.gov or 202-564-1721, for more information regarding the Draft Final Guidelines. You may also want to visit the EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water web site at www.epa.gov/safewater/tribal.html for updates.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Water
Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water

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