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## **Guide to Preparation of Applications for Approval of Continuing Education Programs and Courses**

[Title 124 - Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems](#) requires any continuing education program or course to be used for the purpose of fulfilling the education requirements of a [certified onsite professional](#) be approved by the Nebraska Department of Environment & Energy (NDEE). A continuing education provider must submit the proposed program or course to the Department for approval not less than 60 days prior to the date the proposed program or course is offered for presentation. A certified professional may submit a proposed program or course for approval if the provider has not submitted the same for consideration, except for independent or self-study programs or courses, which must be submitted by the provider. The Department evaluates and determines the number of Professional Development Hours (PDHs) that a certified professional can claim for successful, documented completion of any educational course or program. Continuing education units, PDHs, are based on the actual contact hours of training or education.

The following is intended to assist with the preparation and submittal of an application for approval of continuing education programs and provide a framework to evaluate these programs to ensure they are adequate and improve or enhance a certified professional's knowledge of the onsite wastewater treatment system regulations in Nebraska.

### **Program and Course Content**

Programs and courses must be appropriate; directly associated with the onsite wastewater industry or related workplace safety; cover topics related to the responsibilities carried on by the certified professional; and provide information or training that serves to enhance a certified professional's knowledge of and ability to perform activities that protect the public health and the environment. The following performance objectives, by certificate category, outline the knowledge and skill areas that onsite wastewater professionals need to acquire and/or meet their responsibilities and perform in the areas for which they apply for certification or carry out their duties:

- Installer (Master or Journeyman)
  - Basic Concepts in Site Evaluation
  - Basic Soil Concepts and Soil Evaluation Methods
  - Nebraska Soils and Geology
  - Basic Concepts in Siting and Layout
  - Basic Concepts in Construction and Installation
  - Basic Concepts in Repair or Modification
  - Basic Concepts in Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Inspection

- System Registration
  - Proper Practices for Homeowner Septic System Management
  - Basic Title 124 Requirements
  - Basic Concepts in Inspection and Inspection Safety
  - Basic Septic Tank Design
  - Septic Tank Safety
  - Basic Record Keeping
  - Basic Business
  - Basic Work Safety
- Soil Evaluator
    - Basic Concepts in Site Evaluation
    - Basic Soil Concepts and Soil Evaluation Methods
    - Nebraska Soils and Geology
    - Basic Concepts in Siting and Layout
    - Basic Title 124 Requirements
    - Basic Record Keeping
    - Basic Business
    - Basic Work Safety
- Inspector
    - Basic Concepts in Site Evaluation
    - Basic Soil Concepts and Soil Evaluation Methods
    - Basic Concepts in Siting and Layout
    - Basic Concepts in Construction and Installation
    - Basic Concepts in Repair or Modification
    - Basic Concepts in Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Inspection
    - Proper Practices for Homeowner Septic System Management
    - Basic Concepts in Inspection and Inspection Safety
    - Basic Title 124 Requirements
    - Septic Tank Safety
    - Basic Record Keeping
    - Basic Business
    - Basic Work Safety
- Pumper (Master or Journeyman)
    - Basic Septic Tank Design
    - Basic Septic Tank Function and Operation
    - Basic Concepts in Repair
    - Septic Tank Inspection and Safety
    - Proper Handling and Disposal of Domestic Septage
    - Proper Practices for Homeowner Septic System Management
    - Basic Title 124 Requirements
    - Basic Record Keeping
    - Basic Business
    - Basic Work Safety

Program or course content failing to provide instruction related to the performance objectives will generally not be approved by the Department. A provider must be prepared to provide more detailed information on any portion of the program or course that does not pertain to the performance objectives.

## **Submittal Method**

Information may be submitted by regular mail, fax, or email. Electronic submittals should be Microsoft compatible (Word, Excel).

## **Submittal Deadline**

The proposed program or course must be submitted to the NDEE for approval not less than 60 days prior to the date offered. A continuing education provider cannot advertise or otherwise represent any program or course as approved for meeting the continuing education requirements of [Title 124](#) until such program or course is approved by the NDEE.

## **Contact Information**

Provide complete contact information with each submittal. Include the name of the contact person or persons responsible for the program, mailing address, telephone numbers (and fax numbers, if appropriate) and email address and website URL.

## **General Program Information**

Include planned program times, dates, and locations. When a program is approved, this information is included on the list of [approved programs](#) on the NDEE webpage.

## **Speaker Qualifications**

For a classroom style continuing education program or course, the provider must demonstrate the instruction or presentations will be conducted by individuals qualified in the program or course topic. For an independent or self-study program or course, the provider must demonstrate that a qualified individual(s) developed, and is directly responsible for, the program or course content.

It is your responsibility to demonstrate to the Department's satisfaction that a qualified individual(s) developed and/or will conduct the instruction of the program or course topic. The following should be provided for each presenter:

- Full name;
- Contact information;
- Experience, training, or professional licenses held; and
- Professional experience

A speaker's professional experience, publications, projects, or educational activities may be beneficial to help demonstrate the speaker's qualifications in a particular area. Please note that statements like "has nine years experience with septic systems", "has worked on 20 facilities", "has many wastewater publications", "has presented many programs", or similar statements provide little or no useful information to demonstrate or verify the speaker's qualifications. Provide specific examples of qualifications. Consider statements like: "Mr. Smith has been a certified Installer for 6 years and has installed or supervised the installation of over 40 onsite systems" or "Ms. Jones, P.E., has been the engineer responsible for the design and permits for 5 mound systems".

The Department may request additional information as needed. If a wide variety of topics and programs are submitted, some speaker's qualifications may not be considered adequate for all program areas. Please note the Department does not qualify or maintain a list of "approved" speakers. It is the program providers' responsibility to provide sufficient biographical information with each application to allow the NDEE to decide or verify that a speaker is qualified for the program area or areas identified. Failure to submit speaker information with each application may delay your application.

## **Detailed Program**

For a classroom style continuing education program or course, submit an outline of the program or course with adequate detail to verify the topics of presentation, including detailed timelines to show the hours of education presentation planned. A short one sentence description for a one-hour presentation will likely not be a sufficient description. Please identify expected break times and note that break times are not considered contact time for PDHs. Some explanation will likely be required if breaks are not included in the program. One PDH equals 60 minutes of contact time, and the program time should be identified to the nearest  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an hour. Consequently, it is recommended that descriptions for program presentations over one-hour in length be broken into  $\frac{1}{4}$  hour increments.

For an independent or self-study program or course, the provider must also submit an outline of the program or course with adequate detail to verify the topics of presentation and the hours of education presentation planned. In addition, a description of the training format and delivery should also be provided. Some training may require student participation. For example, some online classes may use a learning system where students must correctly answer a series of questions before they can complete the course or proceed to the next part. If a question is missed, the student reviews the program until they can correctly answer the question. Some courses may be designed to allow the student to start and stop at their convenience. Other courses may require the student to be engaged for an extended period of time with no interruptions and/or successfully complete multiple session courses within a specified timeframe.

Consequently, the length of the course must be provided. If the training course

consists of multiple parts, the length of each session, as well as a discussion of whether completion of each part is required for successful completion of the course, is essential for determining the number of PDHs a certified professional may claim for the course.

## **Restricted Hours**

A maximum of two professional development hours in each two-year certification cycle may be from pre-approved courses peripheral to the actual activity of the onsite wastewater industry for such things as business tax law, accounting, insurance or first aid training. For purposes of professional development hours, workplace safety and protection of work activities shall be considered directly related to the actual activity of the onsite wastewater industry. Please be prepared to provide more detailed information on any portion of the program that might be subject to this restriction. PDHs subject to this limitation will be noted in the Department's approval and the program should also include some notation regarding the portions of the program subject to this restriction.

## **Documentation/Verification of Attendance**

The application must include the method to be used to document attendance. You must demonstrate adequate capability to document and maintain records of attendance at the program or course and agree to provide the Department a list of attendees, along with their certification numbers, who have completed the program or course (along with each attendee's PDHs) within 30 days of the program or completion of the course. If there are concurrent portions in a program, the program provider will need to identify how attendance will be verified for each program segment. Note that the PDHs an onsite professional can use to meet continuing education requirements will be restricted or not allowed for any identical programs in the same certification renewal cycle. For an independent or self-study program or course, students will need to print out and submit their certificates upon successful completion of the course.

## **Trade Shows**

While certified professionals can obtain useful information at trade shows, please note that trade shows or similar type activities generally cannot meet the specific educational activity, presenter information, and attendance documentation requirements needed to comply with the continuing education criteria in Title 124. There is no separate provision in Title 124 to qualify these types of activities.

## **Approval**

The Department tries to review each application in a timely manner. Submittal of a program does not guarantee approval. Any approval will be documented in

writing by the Department and included on a list of [approved continuing education programs](#) maintained on the Department's webpage.

The Department may also request access from the continuing education provider to monitor or audit the program to verify the topics of the presentation meet the performance objectives and is consistent with the detailed timelines showing the hours of education presentation planned.