



**STATE OF WASHINGTON
BOARD OF REGISTRATION FOR
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS**
P.O. Box 9025, Olympia, WA 98507-9025

Date: December 1, 2021

To: All Interested Parties
All Licensed On-Site Wastewater Professionals
Local Environmental Health Directors

From: Ken Fuller, PE, Director

Subject: Inspector Certificate of Competency Holders - Requirements

The Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors is currently updating several rules under Chapter 196 and determined that Chapter 196-32 *On-site wastewater treatment system designer licenses/inspector certificates of competency* has not been significantly updated since the on-site designers and inspector certificate of competency holder program was created.

The Board established an ad-hoc On-Site Committee, made up of licensed on-site designers and inspectors, to review and develop policies and update the rules regulating of on-site wastewater treatment system designers and inspector certificate of competency holders. Committee members and staff, including the Board's AAG Advisor, have met to propose draft language for WAC 196-32, and have had several discussions regarding requirements for inspector certificate of competency holders.

Since the proposed language may impact local health jurisdiction employees, the committee is requesting your comments and/or suggestions about the proposed draft language below:

This proposed section is for when a certificate of competency holder is applying for a designer's license:

Proposed WAC 196-32-020 Acceptable experience and supporting documents.

(4) A certificate of competency holder may receive no more than three years of experience, including education, towards the required experience while working for a

local health jurisdiction. A certificate of competency holder must have a minimum of one year of design work experience under a licensed designer or professional engineer.

This proposed section would be an additional requirement that must be met before an applicant could take the exam:

WAC 196-32-030 Requirements for inspector certificate of competency.

(2) Have one year of practical work experience under the supervision of a certificate of competency holder or one year of previous work under a licensed on-site designer or professional engineer, unless otherwise approved by the board.

The full WACs including the addition of this proposed language are included for context. In addition, the applicable statutes are provided after the proposed WACs.

Again, this is early in the rulemaking process. The proposed language above is a first draft. All thoughts and comments are welcome and encouraged.

Please send your comments/suggestions to the Board (engineers@brpels.wa.gov) no later than January 10, 2022.

**Reference: RCW 70A.105.110
RCW 18.210.190**

WAC 196-32-020 Acceptable experience and supporting

documents. The four years of experience should include site and soil assessment, hydraulics, topographic delineations, use of specialized treatment processes and devices, microbiology, and construction practices. The following criteria will be used in evaluating an applicant's experience record:

(1) Acceptable work experience shall be broad based and progressive in the design of on-site wastewater treatment systems. Work experience will be considered by the board based upon the verifications provided by the applicant, the level of independent judgments and decisions, and the demonstration of the ability to work within the regulatory structure. This experience must include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- (a) Applying state and local health regulations;
- (b) Exercising sound judgment when making independent decisions regarding the sciences and technologies of on-site wastewater treatment systems;
- (c) Field identification and evaluation of soil types and site conditions;

(d) Conducting research and;

(e) Interacting with clients and the public in conformance with chapter 18.210 RCW.

(2) Of the four years of work experience required, education relevant to on-site wastewater treatment may be considered satisfactory experience up to a maximum two years; the board will determine if the education credentials are satisfactory to award years of experience based on the following:

(a) Graduation from a baccalaureate or associate degree program which contains course work in the sciences and technologies of engineering and/or on-site wastewater treatment systems, as provided in RCW 18.210.100 may be awarded up to a maximum of two years of experience. Course work relevant to on-site wastewater systems includes soil science, geology, biology, mapping, and site development construction management.

(b) Completed college level course work without a degree will be evaluated by the board.

(c) Documented seminars, industry training programs, and other educational or training programs specifically related to

the science and technologies of on-site wastewater treatment systems will be evaluated by the board.

Official transcripts and/or other official educational documents must be sent to the board's office for review and approval to count towards experience.

(3) On-site wastewater related teaching may be considered satisfactory experience up to a maximum of one year at the discretion of the board.

(4) A certificate of competency holder may receive no more than three years of experience, including education, towards the required experience while working for a local health jurisdiction. A certificate of competency holder must have a minimum of one year of design work experience under a licensed designer or professional engineer.

(5) Any work experience gained in a situation which violates the provisions of chapter 18.210 RCW will not be credited towards the experience requirement.

WAC 196-32-030 Requirements for inspector certificate of

competency. To receive an inspector certificate of competency you must meet the requirements below:

(1) Be an employee of a local health jurisdiction that reviews, inspects, or approves the design and construction of on-site wastewater treatment systems.

(2) Have one year of practical work experience under the supervision of a certificate of competency holder or one year of previous work under a licensed on-site designer or professional engineer, unless otherwise approved by the board.

(3) Fully complete the application form to the satisfaction of the board.

(4) Provide a written request from the local health jurisdiction. Requests shall be submitted on a form prescribed by the board.

(5) Pay all applicable fees.

(6) Obtain a passing score on the Washington law review.

(7) Obtain a passing score on the on-site wastewater system examination.

Upon passing the on-site wastewater system examination, the applicant will be issued a certificate of competency. Issuance of the certificate of competency does not authorize the certificate of competency holder to offer or provide on-site wastewater treatment system design services to the public.

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RCW 70A.105.110

Inspectors—Certificate of competency.

(1) The local board of health shall ensure that individuals who conduct inspections of on-site wastewater treatment systems or who otherwise conduct reviews of such systems are qualified in the technology and application of on-site sewage treatment principles. A certificate of competency issued by the state board of registration for professional engineers and land surveyors is adequate demonstration that an individual is competent in the engineering aspects of on-site wastewater treatment system technology.

(2) A local board of health may allow noncertified individuals to review designs of, and conduct inspections of, on-site wastewater treatment systems for a maximum of two years after the date of hire, if a certified individual reviews or supervises the work during that time.

[[2019 c 442 § 20](#); [1999 c 263 § 22](#). Formerly RCW [70.118.120](#).]

RCW 18.210.190

Local health jurisdictions—Certificate of competency—Fee.

(1) Employees of local health jurisdictions who review, inspect, or approve the design and construction of on-site wastewater treatment systems shall obtain a certificate of competency by obtaining a passing score on the written examination administered for licensure under this chapter. Eligibility to apply for the certificate of competency is based upon a written request from the local health director or designee and payment of a fee established by the director. The certificate of competency is renewable upon payment of a fee established by the director. Certificate holders are also subject to the requirements of RCW [18.210.140](#)(1).

(2) Issuance of the certificate of competency does not authorize the certificate holder to offer or provide on-site wastewater treatment system design services. However, nothing in this chapter limits or affects the ability of local health jurisdictions to perform on-site design services under their authority in chapter [70.05](#) RCW.

(3) Local health jurisdictions and the state department of health retain authority to:

(a) Administer state and local regulations and codes for approval or disapproval of designs for on-site wastewater treatment systems;

(b) Issue permits for construction;

(c) Evaluate soils and site conditions for compliance with code requirements; and

(d) Perform on-site wastewater treatment design work as authorized in state and local board of health rules.

[[2011 c 256 § 12](#); [1999 c 263 § 20](#).]