

RCW 90.03.665 Certified water right examiners—Fees—Rules. (1)

The department shall establish and maintain a list of certified water right examiners. Certified water right examiners on the list are eligible to perform final proof examinations of permitted water uses leading to the issuance of a water right certificate under RCW 90.03.330. The list must be updated annually and must be made available to the public through written and electronic media.

(2) In order to qualify, an individual must be registered in Washington as a professional engineer, professional land surveyor, or registered hydrogeologist, or an individual must demonstrate at least five years of applicable experience to the department, or be a board member of a water conservancy board. Qualified individuals must also pass a written examination prior to being certified by the department. Such an examination must be administered by either the department or an entity formally approved by the department. Each certified water right examiner must demonstrate knowledge and competency regarding:

- (a) Water law in the state of Washington;
- (b) Measurement of the flow of water through open channels and enclosed pipes;
- (c) Water use and water level reporting;
- (d) Estimation of the capacity of reservoirs and ponds;
- (e) Irrigation crop water requirements;
- (f) Aerial photo interpretation;
- (g) Legal descriptions of land parcels;
- (h) Location of land and water infrastructure through the use of maps and global positioning;
- (i) Proper construction and sealing of well bores; and
- (j) Other topics related to the preparation and certification of water rights in Washington state.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (9) of this section, upon completion of a water appropriation and putting water to beneficial use, in order to receive a final water right certificate, the permit holder must secure the services of a certified water right examiner who has been tested and certified by the department. The examiner shall carry out a final examination of the project to verify its completion and to determine and document for the permit holder and the department the amount of water that has been appropriated for beneficial use, the location of diversion or withdrawal and conveyance facilities, and the actual place of use. The examiner shall take measurements or make estimates of the maximum diversion or withdrawal, the capacity of water storage facilities, the acreage irrigated, the type and number of residences served, the type and number of stock watered, and other information relevant to making a final determination of the amount of water beneficially used. The examiner shall take photographs of the facilities to document the use or uses of water and the photographs must be submitted with the examiner's report to the department. The department shall specify the format and required content of the reports and may provide a form for that purpose.

(4) The department may suspend or revoke a certification based on poor performance, malfeasance, failure to acquire continuing education credits, or excessive complaints from the examiner's customers. The department may require the retesting of an examiner. The department may interview any examiner to determine whether the person is qualified for this work. The department shall spot-check the work of examiners to ensure that the public is being competently served. Any

person aggrieved by an order of the department including the granting, denial, revocation, or suspension of a certificate issued by the department under this chapter may appeal pursuant to chapter 43.21B RCW.

(5) The decision regarding whether to issue a final water right certificate is solely the responsibility and function of the department.

(6) The department shall make its final decision under RCW 90.03.330 within sixty days of the date of receipt of the proof of examination from the certified water right examiner, unless otherwise requested by the applicant or returned for correction by the department. The department may return an initial proof of examination for correction within thirty days of the department's receipt of such initial proof from a certified water right examiner. Such proof must be returned to both the certified water right examiner and the applicant. Within thirty days of the department's receipt of such returned proof from the certified water right examiner, the department shall make its final decision under RCW 90.03.330, unless otherwise requested by the applicant.

(7) Each certified water right examiner must complete eight hours annually of qualifying continuing education in the water resources field. The department shall determine and specify the qualifying continuing education and shall inform examiners of the opportunities. The department shall track whether examiners are current in their continuing education and may suspend the certification of an examiner who has not complied with the continuing education requirement.

(8) Each certified water right examiner must furnish evidence of insurance or financial responsibility in a form acceptable to the department.

(9) The department may waive the requirement to secure the services of a certified water right examiner in situations in which the department has already conducted a final proof of examination or finds it unnecessary for purposes of issuing a certificate of water right.

(10) The department shall establish and collect fees for the examination, certification, and renewal of certification of water right examiners. Revenue collected from these fees must be deposited into the water rights processing account created in RCW 90.03.650. Pursuant to RCW 43.135.055, the department is authorized to set fees for examination, certification, and renewal of certification for water right examiners.

(11) The department may adopt rules appropriate to carry out the purposes of this section. [2013 c 70 § 1; 2010 c 285 § 7.]

Intent—2010 c 285: See note following RCW 90.03.265.