

**RCW 70A.120.030 Certified operators required for certain public water systems.** (1) A public water system shall have a certified operator if:

(a) It is a group A water system; or

(b) It is a public water system using a surface water source or a groundwater source under the direct influence of surface water.

(2) The certified operators shall be in charge of the technical direction of a water system's operation, or an operating shift of such a system, or a major segment of a system necessary for monitoring or improving the quality of water. The operator shall be certified as provided in RCW 70A.120.050.

(3) A certified operator may provide required services to more than one system or to a group of systems. The amount of time that a certified operator shall be required to be present at any given system shall be based upon the time required to properly operate and maintain the public water system as designed and constructed in accordance with RCW 43.20.050. The employing or appointing officials shall designate the position or positions requiring mandatory certification within their individual systems and shall assure that such certified operators are responsible for the system's technical operation.

(4) The department shall, in establishing by rule or otherwise the requirements for public water systems with fewer than one hundred connections, phase in such requirements in order to assure that (a) an adequate number of certified operators are available to serve the additional systems, (b) the systems have adequate notice and time to plan for securing the services of a certified operator, (c) the department has the additional data and other administrative capacity, (d) adequate training is available to certify additional operators as necessary, and (e) any additional requirements under federal law are satisfied. The department shall require certified operators for all group A systems as necessary to conform to federal law or implementing rules or guidelines. Unless necessary to conform to federal law, rules, or guidelines, the department shall not require a certified operator for a system with fewer than one hundred connections unless that system is determined by the department to be in significant noncompliance with operational, monitoring, or water quality standards that would put the public health at risk, as defined by the department by rule, or has, or is required to have, water treatment facilities other than simple disinfection. [2020 c 20 s 1343; 2009 c 221 s 2; 1997 c 218 s 2; 1995 c 376 s 6; 1991 c 305 s 3; 1983 c 292 s 3; 1977 ex.s. c 99 s 3. Formerly RCW 70.119.030.]

**Findings—1997 c 218:** "The legislature finds and declares that:

(1) The provision of safe and reliable water supplies to the people of the state of Washington is fundamental to ensuring public health and continuing economic vitality of this state.

(2) The department of health, pursuant to legislative directive in 1995, has provided a report that incorporates the findings and recommendations of the \*water supply advisory committee as to progress in meeting the objectives of the public health improvement plan, changes warranted by the recent congressional action reauthorizing the federal safe drinking water act, and new approaches to providing services under the general principles of regulatory reform.

(3) The environmental protection agency has recently completed a national assessment of public water system capital needs, which has

identified over four billion dollars in such needs in the state of Washington.

(4) The changes to the safe drinking water act offer the opportunity for the increased ability of the state to tailor federal requirements and programs to meet the conditions and objectives within this state.

(5) The department of health and local governments should be provided with adequate authority, flexibility, and resources to be able to implement the principles and recommendations adopted by the \*water supply advisory committee.

(6) Statutory changes are necessary to eliminate ambiguity or conflicting authorities, provide additional information and tools to consumers and the public, and make necessary changes to be consistent with federal law.

(7) A basic element to the protection of the public's health from waterborne disease outbreaks is systematic and comprehensive monitoring of water supplies for all contaminants, including hazardous substances with long-term health effects, and routine field visits to water systems for technical assistance and evaluation.

(8) The water systems of this state should have prompt and full access to the newly created federal state revolving fund program to help meet their financial needs and to achieve and maintain the technical, managerial, and financial capacity necessary for long-term compliance with state and federal regulations. This requires authority for streamlined program administration and the provision of the necessary state funds required to match the available federal funds.

(9) Stable, predictable, and adequate funding is essential to a statewide drinking water program that meets state public health objectives and provides the necessary state resources to utilize the new flexibility, opportunities, and programs under the safe drinking water act." [1997 c 218 s 1.]

**\*Reviser's note:** The "water supply advisory committee" was eliminated pursuant to 2010 1st sp.s. c 7 s 120.

**Effective date—1997 c 218:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect immediately [April 25, 1997]." [1997 c 218 s 6.]

**Findings—1995 c 376:** See note following RCW 70A.100.060.