

POLICY ON REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES AND COURSE PROVIDERS, SEPTEMBER 2006

The following policy establishes the procedures for the approval of continuing education courses and course providers, hereinafter referred to as providers, for septic tank contractors registered under Part III of Chapter 489, F.S. Septic tank contractors will not be awarded continuing education credit for attending unapproved courses or courses from an unapproved provider.

1. DEFINITIONS

- (A) "Alternative Non-Classroom Continuing Education Hours" are approved continuing education hours, offered in a non-classroom setting, such as correspondence and web-based courses or instruction received via electronic education media.
- (B) "Approved Course Provider" means a person or legal entity, such as a private or a public university, vocational school, construction industry school or other professional association, approved by the department to provide registered or master level courses, or Alternative Non-Classroom Continuing Education Hours.
- (C) "Classroom Hour" and "Contact Hour" means a sixty-minute segment of an approved conference, workshop, seminar or other program of approved instruction, exclusive of any breaks.
- (D) "Course" means a conference, workshop, seminar or other program of instruction, including alternative non-classroom continuing education hours, sponsored by a department approved course provider that has been approved by the department for the purpose of complying with the registered septic tank contracting requirements for continuing education pursuant to ss. 489.554, F.S.
- (E) "Department" means the Department of Health, Bureau of Onsite Sewage Programs.
- (F) "Educational Cycle Year" is the 12-month period between October 1 and September 30.
- (G) "Master Level Course" is a conference, workshop, seminar or other program of approved instruction in advanced onsite sewage treatment and disposal theory, concepts, laws, regulations, applied construction technologies, alternative and innovative technologies, requiring the participant to demonstrate working knowledge or applied understanding of the materials being presented, through testing, field work projects or experiments.
- (H) "Registered Level Course" is a conference, workshop, seminar or other program of approved instruction in onsite sewage treatment and disposal theory, safety (i.e., truck safety, brake inspection, confined spaces, excavation safety, infection control, hand washing, skin cancer, etc.), concepts, laws, regulations, and applied construction technologies.

2. STANDARDS FOR THE APPROVAL OF COURSE PROVIDERS

- (A) Each course provider shall apply to the department for registration on DH Form 4116, 07/03, Application For Septic Tank Contracting Course Provider, herein incorporated by reference. DH Form 4116 can be obtained from the department's Bureau of Onsite Sewage Programs.
- (B) Provider approvals are valid for 4 years from the date the approval is issued.
- (C) Any changes to the information contained in the provider application shall be submitted to the department within 30 days following the effective date of the changes.
- (D) The provider is responsible for maintaining records regarding the name and business affiliation of each person who attends an approved course of instruction and for reporting the attendance to the department.
- (E) Providers shall allow access to approved courses to all registered contractors and shall issue statewide notice of course availability to all active registered septic tank and master septic tank contractors.
- (F) Providers shall be required to provide a post-course evaluation form for completion by the participants.
- (G) Providers shall be required to check a valid picture identification card from attendees when they sign-in. The provider shall remove all participants that engage in behavior that interrupts, impedes or creates disorder during the presentation of approved instruction. One warning shall be given before removal. The provider shall not issue a certificate of completion to any person who has been removed from the course.
- (H) Providers shall issue a certificate of completion to each person who completes an approved course.
- (I) Within 15 working days of course completion, the provider shall provide to the department copies of the sign-in sheets and the list of participant names that qualify to receive continuing education credits. The names and qualifications of any substitute course instructors that were not listed in the original application for course approval shall also be provided. The provider may provide partial course credit in no more than 1/4 hour increments. The provider must approve and document the reason for partial credit.
- (J) The department shall maintain a list of all registered course providers.
- (K) The department shall approve or deny any application for provider approval within the time frames stipulated under s. 120.60, FS. If the application is denied, the department shall identify the specific reasons for the denial in writing. The department may assess penalties against a provider for any of the following acts or omissions:

- (i) Submittal of an incomplete application; to include the application fee. Penalty assessed: Denial of application.
- (ii) Obtaining course approval through fraud, deceit, false statements, or misrepresentation of material facts, whether such statements or misrepresentations are made knowingly or negligently. Penalty assessed: Revocation
- (iii) Falsifying any records regarding the approved course conducted by the provider. Penalty assessed: Revocation
- (iv) Failure to maintain records as specified in section 6 below. Penalty assessed: first violation, letter of warning; repeat violation, fine of up to \$500, suspension or revocation.
- (v) Failure to submit to the department, copies of the sign-in sheets and the list of participant names, that qualify to receive continuing education credits, within 15 days of completion of the course. Penalty assessed: first violation, letter of warning; repeat violation, fine of up to \$500, suspension or revocation.
- (vi) Failure to adequately train staff responsible for taking attendance at any approved course. Penalty assessed: first violation, letter of warning; repeat violation, fine of up to \$500, suspension or revocation.
- (vii) Advertising that a course has been approved by the department prior to the actual date of course approval. Penalty assessed: first violation, letter of warning; repeat violation, fine of up to \$500, suspension or revocation.

(L) A provider who has had their approval revoked may not reapply for approval for 4 years from the date of final agency action. A provider suspension shall be effective for a minimum of 1 educational cycle year.

3. STANDARDS FOR THE APPROVAL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

- (A) Approved course providers shall submit an application for approval of continuing education courses. Providers shall apply to the department for course approvals on DH Form 4115, 07/03, Application for Septic Tank Contracting Course Approval, herein incorporated by reference. DH Form 4115 can be obtained from the department's Bureau of Onsite Sewage Programs.
- (B) An approved course provider shall submit the application at least 60 days prior to the earliest date of the proposed course.
- (C) Course approval is valid for 2 years from date of issue, provided no changes are made to the course content or to the minimum qualifications of the instructors.
- (D) The application shall include the total number of classroom hours, the course agenda, and a detailed course description.
- (E) The department shall approve continuing education courses that appropriately relate to the public health, environmental effects, the proper installation and use of onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems and safety and management practices related to septic tank contracting.
- (F) The department shall approve or deny any application for a continuing education course within the time frames stipulated under s. 120.60, FS. If the application is denied, the department shall identify the specific reasons for the denial in writing.
- (G) The department shall not deny nor withdraw approval for any course solely on the basis that another provider is conducting the same or similar approved course.

4. QUALIFICATIONS OF COURSE INSTRUCTORS

The approved course provider shall be responsible to ensure that instructors assigned to teach a course, or parts of a course, meet one of the following criteria:

- (A) Have a minimum of 3 years of work experience in the subject matter to be presented, or
- (B) Have a 4 year college degree or graduate degree and related work experience, or
- (C) Be a master septic tank contractor, or
- (D) Be a state certified plumber with at least 3 years of experience in their technical area of licensure, or
- (E) Be a registered septic tank contractor with at least 3 years of experience in their technical area of licensure, or
- (F) Be a state certified environmental health professional with at least 3 years of work experience in their technical area of certification.

5. COURSE AGENDA

- (A) Each course shall have a course agenda, which will specify the name of the course, the name and address of the provider and a description or outline of the contents of the course.

(B) Each person who registers for a course must be given the course agenda prior to attendance.

6. APPROVED COURSE PROVIDER RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

The following records shall be maintained for a minimum of 2 years and made available to the department upon request, for each course provided:

- (A) The time, date and place the course is conducted.
- (B) The name, address and qualifications of each instructor who teaches any portion of the course.
- (C) The name and address of each person who attended the course.
- (D) The original sign-in sheet used at the site of the course to register persons who attended each course. The sign-in sheet shall reflect the name and the validated attendance signature of each participant.
- (E) The course agenda used for each course.
- (F) The post-course evaluation forms completed by the participants.

7. ADVERTISING OF CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

- (A) A provider may not advertise a course as one approved by the department for continuing education until the department grants such approval in writing.
- (B) A provider may not include any false or misleading information regarding the contents, instructors or number of classroom hours of any approved course.
- (C) A provider must indicate in all course advertisements, the course has been approved by the department's Bureau of Onsite Sewage Programs.

8. FEES

- (A) The application fee for Septic Tank Contracting Course Provider, DH Form 4116, is \$250.00.
- (B) The application fee for Registered and Master Level Course Approvals, DH Form 4115, is \$25.00 per classroom hour, not to exceed \$150.00 per course approval.