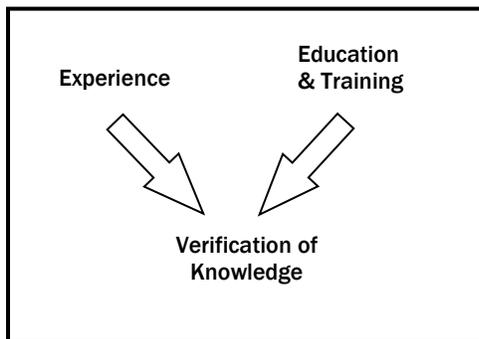


# National Compost Operator Certification Program

The Compost Council of Canada promotes environmentally responsible and compliant operations, and endeavors to raise the level of professionalism within our industry. Certification of facility operations staff achieves this goal by providing a structured means of increasing and verifying the level of knowledge. A certification program can also be used by provincial governments as part of a regulatory approvals scheme.

The Compost Council of Canada's National Compost Operator Certification Program is targeted at the certification of facility Operators and Supervisors. Certification of non-operating personnel (e.g. equipment suppliers, consultants, ministry of environment enforcement staff) is not within the scope of the program at this time. However, non-operational personnel are encouraged to take advantage of the training aspects of the certification program as a means of improving their overall knowledge and experience.



The Program is based on the premise that knowledge is obtained through combination of formal training and hands-on learning. The Compost Council of Canada (CCC) verifies that knowledge requirements have been met through an examination process.

## Responsibility of Certified Operators

In addition to demonstrating their level of proficiency, an Operator takes on certain responsibilities by becoming certified. Most notably, the Operator must understand and adhere to local, provincial and federal regulations and guidelines governing their facility. They must also ensure that their facility is operated in a manner that respects the rights of their neighbors and host community. Finally, Certified Operators must stay informed of advances in practices and technologies.

## Application for Certification

In order to become certified by the CCC, an Applicant must submit a completed application form to the CCC and meet the following requirements:

1. Applicant must be 18 years or older.
2. Applicants must have a minimum of 500 hours of meaningful and verified experience at a composting facility, in an operations or operations supervisory capacity, within the past three years; and
3. Applicants must have obtained two Continuing Education Units (CEU's) of training in composting science, operations or a related topic. One CEU is equivalent to 10 hrs of instructional time.

Once it has been verified that these criteria have been met, the Applicant will be approved to write the certification exam. Successful completion of the exam (70% passing rate) is the final step towards certification. Exam questions are based on the CCC's Operator Competency Profile which outlines what is considered to be the critical knowledge requirements that are needed by operators.

## **Certification Exam**

Completed application forms must be received two weeks in advance of the scheduled exam sitting to allow time for the necessary reviews and approvals.

Approved applicants are given two hours to complete a verification exam which consists of up to 100 questions in multiple choice and true/false format. A passing grade of 70% is required.

Exam questions are based on an Operator Competency Profile that has been developed by CCC (Attachment 1), and includes questions from the following subject areas:

- Composting Science
- Feedstock Preparation
- Site Management
- Troubleshooting
- Compost Related Calculations
- Process Control
- Health and Safety
- Regulatory Compliance
- Sampling and Testing
- Compost Utilization and Marketing

The exam questions are independent of facility size and technology. This means that Applicants running smaller windrow operations will write the same exam as those overseeing larger in-vessel operations.

Exams are supervised by an authorized CCC representative. The exam is offered regionally several times during the year (e.g. Annual CCC conference, CCC regional workshops) and in conjunction with CCC training courses.

## **Exam Rewrites**

If the Candidate does not receive a passing grade on the first attempt at writing the exam, they will be given a second opportunity to write the exam within twelve months without having to reapply for certification. If, upon writing a second time, the candidate does not achieve a passing grade, they will be required to re-apply for certification, and demonstrate that they have acquired at least one additional CEU.

## **Certification Renewal**

The CCC Certification is valid for three years. At the end of this time, the Operator must apply for renewal of their certification. In order to renew, Operators must have:

1. Obtained 1 CEU of relevant training during the preceding three years.
2. Worked in a compost operations or operations supervisory position for at least 1,200 hours during the preceding three year period.

The intent of these requirements is to ensure that Certified Operators remain current with developments in technologies, regulations, and best practices.

## **Program Administration**

The National Certification Program is administered by CCC staff who are responsible for receiving and processing applications, recording and updating information for Certified Operators, sending renewal notices, and supporting the Steering Committee. Certified Operator themselves will be responsible for keeping the CCC apprised of changes in their employment and/or contact information.

## **Continuing Education**

Given the rapid developments within the composting industry, ongoing professional development is a cornerstone of the certification program. In order for the Operator to stay current with industry development, it is necessary to demonstrate ongoing knowledge gain in the form of CEU's. CEU's can be obtained through relevant formal training, attendance at conferences and/or workshops, and involvement in relevant industry organizations or events. The CCC will determine whether CEU's are relevant.

## **Revoking of Certification**

Certification may be revoked if it is found, through the course of an investigation by the CCC, and/or a local, provincial or federal regulatory agency, that the Certified Operator knowingly breached regulatory requirements.

Similarly, certification can be revoked if, in the sole opinion of the CCC, the Operator did not apply reasonable care or judgment, or the application of the Operator's knowledge or ability was not used in the performance of their operational duties.

## **Appeal Process**

Any perceived discrepancies, either in the interpretation of the program guidelines or the application/examination process, may be appealed in writing to the CCC's Board of Directors.

## **Program Fees**

The Certification program is operated on a cost-recovery basis. Applicants for certification will be assessed an initial fee to offset the costs of preparing/marking the examination and administering the program. A lesser fee will be assessed for renewal of certification.

Examination results and certification documentation may be withheld pending payment of program fees