

The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission

Policies and Procedures

Background

In 2003, HB 285 amended the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act of 1975, which created the mandatory certification program for all individuals involved in land disturbing activities in Georgia. The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (GSWCC), in consultation with EPD and the Governor appointed Stakeholder Advisory Board, were charged with developing and implementing this program. HB 285 required individuals to obtain their certifications by December 31, 2006.

On May 14, 2007, Governor Perdue, signed HB 463 into law. HB 463 amended the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act of 1975. HB 463 required those individuals involved in land disturbing activities working in a subcontractor capacity to attend a two hour awareness seminar instead of the Level IA Fundamentals.

With the passage of HB 463, GSWCC, in consultation with the Stakeholder Advisory Board developed the Subcontractor Awareness Seminar. The Subcontractor Awareness Seminar (Certified Subcontractor) is a two hour training course with no exam for individuals working in a subcontractor capacity.

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission's Education and Certification Courses

Level IA Fundamentals

This course is designed for primary, secondary, tertiary permittees, site superintendents, monitoring consultations, builders and developers. It is a one day training with exam. The course covers topics such as, GESA, NPDES, stream buffers as well as Vegetative and Structural BMPs.

Requirements for Level IA Certification "Certified Personnel"

- Must register for and attend a Conservation Commission approved and posted "Fundamentals Seminar" (Level IA).
- Must submit the appropriate certification application.
- Take and receive a passing score of 70% on the Level IA certification exam.

Exam Only Sessions

- Must register for an approved *Exam Only Session*.
- Provide *Proof of Attendance* from a Conservation Commission IA Fundamentals course within 1 year of attended course date.
- Submit the appropriate certification application.
- Take and receive a passing score of 70% on a Level IA certification exam.

Level IB Advanced Fundamentals

This course is designed for regulatory inspectors and those contracted to perform regulatory duties. It is a two-day training with exam. The course covers topics such as, GESA, NPDES, responsibilities of the inspector, elements of an effective erosion and sediment control program as well as Vegetative and Structural BMPs.

Requirements for Level IB Certification "Certified Inspector"

- Must have completed 60 days work experience in the field of erosion and sediment control.
- In lieu of 60 days work experience, you may obtain a Level IA Certification.
- Must register for and attend a Conservation Commission approved and posted "Advanced Fundamentals" Seminar.
- Submit the appropriate certification application.
- Take and receive a passing score of 70% on a Level IB certification exam.

Exam Only Sessions

- Must have completed 60 days work experience in the field of erosion and sediment control.
- In lieu of 60 days work experience, you may obtain a Level IA Certification.
- Must register for an approved *Exam Only Session*.
- Provide *Proof of Attendance* from a Conservation Commission Advanced Fundamentals course within 1 year of attended course date.
- Submit the appropriate certification application.
- Take and receive a passing score of 70% on a Level IB certification exam.

If an individual is Level IB or Level II certified, he or she is not required to obtain a Level IA certification. If an individual needs both a Level IB and Level II certification, he or she may take the Level II course, obtain a passing score on the certification exam and then attend an Exam Only session for Level IB.

Level II Introduction to Design

This course is designed for design professionals and plan reviewers. It is a two-day course with exam. The course covers topics such as, GESA, NPDES, stream buffers, elements of an effective erosion and sediment pollution control plan, the plan review process and issues with stormwater.

Eligibility Requirements for Design Professionals

- Proved proof of Georgia professional licensure in the field of engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, forestry, geology, land surveying or CPESC.

Eligibility Requirements for Plan Reviewers

- Have at least 6 months work experience in the field of erosion and sediment control.
- In lieu of 6 months work experience, an individual may obtain a Level IB certification.

Requirements for Level II Introduction to Design "Certified Design Professional", "Certified Plan Reviewer"

- Must register for and attend a Conservation Commission approved and posted "Introduction to Design Seminar" (Level II).
- Submit the appropriate application.
- Take and receive a passing score of 70% on a Level II certification exam.

Exam Only Sessions

- Must meet eligibility requirements for either Design Professional or Plan Reviewer.
- Must register for an approved *Exam Only Session*.
- Provide *Proof of Attendance* from a Conservation Commission approved Level II Introduction to Design course within 1 year of attended course date.

- Submit the appropriate certification application.
- Take and receive a passing score of 70% on a Level II certification exam.

If an individual is Level IB or Level II certified, he or she is not required to obtain a Level IA certification. If an individual needs both a Level IB and Level II certification, he or she may take the Level II course, obtain a passing score on the certification exam and then attend an Exam Only session for Level IB.

Subcontractor Awareness Seminar

The Subcontractor Awareness Seminar is designed for individuals working in a subcontractor capacity for primary, secondary or tertiary permittees. This is a two hour course with no exam and will cover topics such as, the basics of erosion and sedimentation, what is erosion and sediment control and why it is important, E&S laws and the most common Best Management Practices.

Subcontractor Awareness Seminars will be conducted by GSWCC and GSWCC Approved Level I Trainers.

It is important to note that a subcontractor certification does NOT qualify an individual to perform the duties of a "qualified" or "certified" person/personnel. If an individual is performing such duties, a Level IA certification is required.

If an individual is working in a subcontractor capacity and possess a Level IA certification, that individual is not required to take the Subcontractor Awareness Seminar.

If an individual is working in a subcontractor capacity and has attended a Level IA course but does not possess a Level IA certification, that person will not be required to take the Subcontractor Awareness Seminar. However, they must complete and submit a Subcontractor Awareness application along with a Proof of Attendance form to receive a Subcontractor card.

GSWCC will only provide proof of attendance forms for courses held by GSWCC. Individuals attending a Subcontractor Seminar given by a GSWCC approved trainer must obtain the Proof of Attendance form from the GSWCC approved trainer course instructor.

Requirements for Subcontractor Awareness – Certified Subcontractor

- Attend a GSWCC approved Subcontractor Awareness Seminar
- Complete and submit a Subcontractor Awareness Seminar application
- Complete and submit a Subcontractor Awareness Seminar enrollment form

Application and Enrollment Forms

Individuals that attend a Subcontractor Awareness Seminar will receive the application and enrollment form at the end of the course. The course instructor will distribute the forms and give instructions on how to complete the forms via a PowerPoint presentation provided by GSWCC.

When an individual submits their forms, the course instructor will ask to see the individual's government issued photo ID. If an individual cannot present a government issued ID, the application will not be accepted.

GSWCC Spanish Courses

It is the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission's (GSWCC) policy that a GSWCC Level I approved trainer may contract or form an agreement with an individual to offer the Spanish Level IA Fundamentals and Spanish Subcontractor Awareness Seminar under the following terms:

1. The contracted individual must be fluent in English and Spanish.
2. The contracted individual must provide a letter of recommendation regarding their ability to speak Spanish and a current resume to GSWCC.
3. The contracted individual must have a minimum of 1 year experience in erosion and sediment control or construction; or in lieu of 1 year experience show proof of certification as a trainer in E & S or construction safety from another federal or state regulatory agency and have taken and passed at least Level 1-A GSWCC course.
4. The contracted individual must present the entire course and exam procedures in Spanish, as provided by GSWCC.
5. The GSWCC Level I approved trainer must be present throughout the entire course and be available to answer questions. The contracted individual will translate the questions from Spanish to English for the Level I approved trainer and then translate the answer from English to Spanish for the course attendees.
6. The GSWCC Level I approved trainer is responsible for the actions of the contracted individual and the entire course. An approved Level I trainer must petition the GSWCC to follow this policy. This request must be submitted in writing prior to a course being held.

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Certification Exams for Level IA, IB and II

Applications and Answer Sheet

Individuals will receive the appropriate application and answer sheet prior to taking the exam. The exam proctor will be responsible for distributing the applications and answer sheets. The proctor will also be responsible for giving instruction on completing the application and answer sheet via the exam procedures PowerPoint presentation.

Proof of Attendance Form

The Proof of Attendance form has been developed by GSWCC. Individuals will receive a Proof of Attendance form if:

- the individual attends a certification course and chooses not to sit for the certification exam. In which case, the course trainer or course proctor will issue a Proof of Attendance form. At the time of issuance both parties must sign the form.

OR

- the individual attends a certification course, takes the exam but fails to obtain a passing score of 70% or higher. In which case, GSWCC will send a letter informing the individual that they did not pass along with a Proof of Attendance form. Individuals must retake the exam within one calendar year from the date of the initial exam.

Individuals should submit the Proof of Attendance form at the time of an exam only session.

Certification Exams

All certification exams, except for Trainer Level I and Trainer Level II, have a one hour time limit and consist of 50 questions. The exam is open course notebook, which includes the course notebook and any notes that were taken during the course. Individuals may not use any other reference material which includes, but not limited to the Field Manual for Erosion Control in Georgia, Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia or any other material not part of the course notebook.

Before, during and until the exam has been turned in, individuals must turn off cell phones, pagers and electronic devices. If an individual uses one of these devices at any of the specified times, their exams will not be scored and that individual will receive a zero.

Individuals may not talk once the exam has been distributed, if an individual has a question or is in need of assistance, they must raise their hand and only speak to the exam proctor. If an individual speaks to another attendee, their exam(s) will not be scored and the individual(s) will receive a zero.

Individuals may not leave the exam room until the exam has been completed and turned in. If an individual leaves the room before the exam has been completed and turned in the individual's exam will not be score and that the individual will receive a zero.

Individuals must turn the exam booklet, exam answer sheet and application to the exam proctor, at which time the individual must present a government issued photo ID (no copies or non-government IDs will be accepted) If an individual cannot present a government issued ID or does not turn in the specified documents, their exam will not be scored and the individual will receive a zero. Individuals unable to present a government issued photo ID should ask the proctor for a Proof of Attendance form.

Exam Scores

Exam scores will be posted on the GSWCC's website at www.gaswcc.georgia.gov approximately two weeks after the exam date. To access exam score via website, go to www.gaswcc.georgia.gov, under How Do I, click Check Exam Scores or Verify Current Certification, from that page, under the appropriate level select course location and date. Exams scores are posted by an individuals ID number, which is the individuals date of birth and last four digits of their Social Security Number.

Certification Cards

Individuals that obtain a passing score of 70% or higher on a Level IA, IB or II certification, will receive a certification card in the mail. According to the Rules, GSWCC has 60 days to issue certification cards, however, individuals should receive their certification card within two weeks of exam date. Certification cards will contain the certified individual's name, certification level, certification number as well as the issued and expiration date. Certification cards are valid for 3 years.

When completing the application, individuals must designate which mailing address they would like all GSWCC correspondence sent to. Certification cards will be mailed to the preferred mailing address.

Subcontractor Certification Cards

Individuals will receive their certification cards approximately two weeks from the date they took the course. Subcontractor certification cards will contain the certified individual's name, certification number as well as the issued and expiration date. Certification cards are valid for 3 years.

When completing the application, individuals must designate which mailing address they would like all GSWCC correspondence sent to. Subcontractor certification cards will be mailed to the preferred mailing address.

If an individual is Level 1A, 1B, or II certified and wishes to obtain a Subcontractor Awareness card, he or she must first attend a Subcontractor Awareness course. Subcontractor cards will not be issued to individuals with other certifications unless they attend a Subcontractor Awareness course.

Replacement Certification Cards

In the event an individual does not receive, loses or damages their certification card, they must send a self addressed, stamped envelope along with a written request for a new card to:

Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission
The Education and Certification Program
4310 Lexington Road
Athens GA 30605

Failure to Obtain a Passing Score on the Certification Exam

Individuals that do not pass the initial certification exam may retake the exam at an Exam Only Session. If the individual fails to receive obtain a passing score on the certification exam for a second time, they must retake the course before taking the exam again.

Exam Only Sessions

Individuals may attend an Exam Only Session if they attended a certification course, but did not take the exam or attended a certification course and failed the exam.

At the Exam Only Session individuals will receive instruction on completing the application and answer sheet. At no time throughout the Exam Only Session will individuals will receive instruction on the course material.

Individuals should bring with them their course notebook, Proof of Attendance form and government issued photo ID.

Exam Only Sessions may be administered by GSWCC, GSWCC Approved Trainers and GSWCC Approved Proctors.

Denial of Certification

There are certain situations in which an individual will be denied certification although they obtained a passing score on the certification exam. These situations include but are not limited to:

- Failure to show proof of attendance at the appropriate certification course.
- Failure to provide proof of work experience (Level IB and Level II).
- Failure to provide proof of GA licensure (Level II). It is the individual's responsibility to notify GSWCC when the GA licensure has been obtained.
- GA licensure has lapsed, been revoked, or expired. It is the individual's responsibility to notify GSWCC when the licensure has been reinstated.
- Submitting false information on application.
- Failure to meet prerequisites (Level IB and Level II).
- Failure to comply with Lawful Presence requirements.

Becoming A GSWCC Approved Trainer

GSWCC allows qualified individuals to become GSWCC Approved Trainers. GSWCC Approved Trainers will be given the GSWCC course material and be able to hold certification courses and administer certification exams.

There are two levels of GSWCC Approved Trainers. Individuals certified as a GSWCC Approved Trainer Level I may give instruction on Level IA Fundamentals, Level IB Advanced Fundamentals, Subcontractor Awareness and GSWCC re-certification courses for Level IA and IB. Individuals certified as a GSWCC Approved Trainer Level II may give instruction on Level II Introduction to Design and GSWCC re-certification course for Level II.

Approved Trainer Level I Eligibility Requirements:

1. Education and Experience:
 - Education: Four-year college degree
 - Experience: Five years in the field of erosion and sediment control
OR
 - Experience Only: Ten years total experience in erosion and sediment control
2. Approval by the GSWCC Board and Stakeholder Advisory Board
3. Successful completion of Level I Trainer and Instructor Seminar

Approved Trainer Level II Eligibility Requirements

1. Education and experience:
 - Education: Four-year college degree in engineering or natural sciences
 - Experience: Five years in the field of erosion and sediment control
OR
 - Licensure: In the field of engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, forestry, geology or land surveying or CPESC
 - Experience: Ten years of experience in the field of erosion and sediment control
2. Approval by GSWCC Board and Stakeholder Advisory Board
3. Successful completion of Level II Trainer and Instructor Seminar

Approved Trainer Application Process

Individuals interested in becoming a GSWCC Approved Trainer must submit appropriate application and current resume 60 days prior to scheduled course date (incomplete applications will be returned to applicant). Applications are available at www.gaswcc.georgia.gov on the Trainer Page. All applications are reviewed by GSWCC staff to determine eligibility for course attendance. Notification will be sent within 30 days of receipt of application. If an application is denied a written appeals must be received within 10 days.

Individuals wishing to obtain status as a Level I and Level II Trainer must complete and submit both applications. If approved, individual must register for and attend the Trainer Level I and Trainer Level II courses, and obtain a passing score on both trainer exams.

Trainer Certification Exams

The Trainer Level I and Trainer Level II exams are both 100 questions with a two hour time limit. Individuals must obtain a passing rate of 85% to be eligible for GSWCC Board and Stakeholder Advisory Board approval.

The exam is open course notebook, which includes the trainer course material and any notes that were taken during the course. GSWCC will provide each attendee with course notebooks that may be used during the exam. Trainer I attendees will receive the IA and IB course notebook and Trainer II attendees will receive the Level II course notebook. Individuals may not use any other reference material which includes, but not limited to the Field Manual for Erosion Control in Georgia, Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia or any other material not part of the course notebooks.

Before, during and until the exam has been turned in, individuals must turn off cell phones, pagers and electronic devices. If an individual uses one of these devices at any of the specified times, their exams will not be scored and that individual will receive a zero.

Individuals may not talk once the exam has been distributed, if an individual has a question or is in need of assistance, they must raise their hand and only speak to the exam proctor. If an individual speaks to another attendee, their exams will not be scored and the individual(s) will receive a zero.

Individuals may not leave the exam room until the exam has been completed and turned in. If an individual leaves the room before the exam has been completed and turned in the individual's exam will not be score and that the individual will receive a zero.

Individuals must turn in the exam booklet and answer sheet to the exam proctor, at which time the individual must present a government issued photo ID (no copies or non-government IDs will be accepted) If an individual cannot present a government issued ID or does not turn in the specified documents, their exam will not be scored and the individual will receive a zero. Individuals unable to present a government issued photo ID should ask the proctor for a Proof of Attendance form.

Exam Scores

Exam scores will be posted on the GSWCC's website at www.gaswcc.georgia.gov approximately two weeks after the exam date. To access exam score via website, go to www.gaswcc.georgia.gov, under How

Do I, click Check Exam Scores or Verify Current Certification, from that page, under the appropriate level select course location and date. Exams scores are posted by an individual's ID number, which is the individuals date of birth and last four digits of their Social Security Number.

GSWCC Board and Stakeholder Advisory Board Approval

Once an individual obtains a passing score on the trainer certification exam, their name along with a brief biography are submitted to the Stakeholder Advisory Board and GSWCC Board for approval. Once approved GSWCC will assign a Trainer ID number and issue a trainer certification card.

Revocation/Suspension of Trainer Status

GSWCC reserves the right to revoke or suspend approved trainer status. Trainer status may be revoked or suspended in the following situations, but not limited to:

- Certification obtained through fraud
- Violation of rules
- Failure to demonstrate reasonable care, judgment or application of knowledge and ability in performance of duties
- Misleading representation during course
- Unprofessional or immoral behavior relating to certification
- Aiding any uncertified person in practicing as a certified person
- Mental incompetence
- Use of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, chemicals, etc that would affect performance

GSWCC may suspend any trainer at any time for not following the policies and procedures.

Revocation of Trainer Certification

- When a certified trainer is alleged to have committed of the above grounds, the certification of that trainer may be summarily revoked without the right to a hearing or continuance of training.
- A Notice of Revocation will be issued to the certified trainer.
- The certified trainer may request a hearing within 20 days.
- A request to a hearing shall not stay the revocation.
- Failure to request a hearing constitutes a voluntary waiver of the right to a hearing.
- The GSWCC will conduct a hearing, if requested, to determine whether a revocation is warranted.
- The certified trainer has the right to appear before the GSWCC, with or without counsel, and submit anything in his/her defense.
- GSWCC will either affirm or deny revocation.

Suspension of Trainer Certification

- When a certified trainer is alleged to have committed any of the above grounds, the certification of that trainer may be summarily suspended without the right to a hearing or continuance of training for a period of at least 45 days.
- A Notice of Suspension will be issued to that certified trainer.
- The certified trainer may request a hearing within 20 days.
- A request to a hearing shall not stay the suspension.

- Failure to request a hearing constitutes a voluntary waiver the right to a hearing.
- The GSWCC will conduct a hearing to determine whether the suspension is warranted.
- The certified trainer has the right to appear before the GSWCC, with or without counsel, and submit anything in his/her defense.
- GSWCC may
 - a. affirm or deny the suspension;
 - b. lengthen or shorten the suspension;
 - c. terminate or set aside the period of suspension; or
 - d. convert the suspension into a revocation.

Scheduling a Certification Course

Before a certification course the approved trainer must notify GSWCC of the scheduled course at least 30 days prior to the date of the course. Course notification must be given using the Notification of Scheduled Education and Certification Courses for Approved Trainers form. Trainers must provide the following information:

- Course name (Level 1A, 1B or II)
- Course date
- Maximum number of attendees
- Course location
- Name and number of designated course contact
- Course Proctor

Completed Course Notification form must be emailed, to:

Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission
Education and Certification Program at:
Certification@gaswcc.ga.gov

Any changes or cancellations of courses must be submitted in writing to GSWCC at least 10 days prior to the date of the course. Upon receiving the course notification form the information will be entered into the Education and Certification database and posted on GSWCC website under the appropriate certification level.

The Subcontractor Awareness Seminar

The procedures a trainer must follow for holding a Subcontractor Awareness Seminar are a little different because GSWCC does not have to create an exam. Trainers must still notify GSWCC prior to holding a Subcontractor Awareness Seminar. GSWCC recommends instructors notify GSWCC at least 10 days prior to hosting a course.

Conducting a Subcontractor Awareness Seminar

Trainers must use the GSWCC issued PowerPoint Subcontractor Awareness Seminar presentation. There is no official agenda for the course and at any point during the course trainers may take a break, however the course cannot exceed two hours.

After the Subcontractor Awareness Seminar

After the course instructors must:

- Collect application/enrollment forms and check photo IDs.
- Complete the Chain of Custody form provided by GSWCC.
- Secure all application/enrollment forms and Chain of Custody form and ship back to GSWCC.
- Must be shipped back within 48 hours of course and sent with some form of tracking.

Chain of Custody Forms for Subcontractor Awareness Seminar

Chain of Custody forms will be provided by GSWCC. If instructor does not have a Chain of Custody form because they are using leftover application/enrollment forms, they may contact the Education and Certification Dept and have the form emailed.

Shipping of Exams and Exam Materials

GSWCC will create the certification exam and prepare for shipping. GSWCC will ship the requested number of exams and application/answer sheets along with a Chain of Custody Form and Proof of Attendance forms. GSWCC will ship the exam packet using the instructor's UPS or FedEx account number.

If a certification course is canceled, the exams must be sent back to GSWCC within 48 hours of the course being canceled. Exams may NOT be held and used for another course. If a trainer submits completed exams from a canceled course, the exams will NOT be scored. GSWCC staff will notify course attendees and explain that their exams were not accepted because the trainer did not administer an approved exam.

GSWCC will ensure that trainers receive exams at least two (2) days prior to the scheduled course. If the trainer does not receive the exams two days prior to the scheduled course, they must contact GSWCC immediately. Exams will not be emailed or faxed the day of the course. It is the trainer's responsibility to check the website to ensure their course has been posted and notify GSWCC if the exams have not been received.

Subcontractor Applications/Enrollment Forms

GSWCC will ship the application/enrollment forms using the instructor's UPS or FedEx account number, please keep in mind the shipping charges will be based on the amount of notice given to GSWCC. Instructors may keep any unused Scantron application/enrollment forms for upcoming courses.

Trainers must have attendees complete an application/enrollment form. Instructors must use the Application/enrollment Form Instruction PowerPoint presentation provided by GSWCC.

Instructors must check for government issued photo IDs when attendees submit forms. Instructors cannot accept photo copies of IDs or IDs issued by a non-government entity.

Exam Overage Fees

GSWCC will allow for five unused exams to be returned free of charge. GSWCC will charge trainers \$1.20 per copy for each unused exam over the five unused limit. Trainers will be billed periodically for their exam overages.

Trainer Responsibilities

- Trainers are responsible for printing a course notebook for each participant. (See Printing Requirements)
- Trainers must make sure the agenda, all course materials, and PowerPoint presentations are followed in strict adherence to the ones adopted by GSWCC.
- Trainers may not substitute any material on the agenda. Any additional information not on the agenda must be covered after the exam has been completed and attendance must be made optional.
- Trainers may proctor their own courses or they may choose an approved proctor from the list on the GSWCC website.

Printing Requirements for Certification Course Notebooks

Level IA Course notebooks must:

1. be in a 1 ½” or larger white binder.
2. be a copy of the Level IA notebook provided by GSWCC, at no time should information be removed or added.
3. have each section tabbed.
4. use the notebook cover provided by GSWCC with instructor information personalized.

Level IB course notebook must:

1. be in a 2” or larger white binder.
2. be a copy of the Level IB notebook provided by GSWCC, at no time should information be removed or added.
3. have each section tabbed.
4. use the notebook cover provided by the GSWCC with instructor information personalized.

Level II course notebook must:

1. be in a 1 ½” white binder or larger.
2. be a copy of the Level II notebook provided by GSWCC, at no time should information be removed or added.
3. have each section tabbed.
4. use the notebook cover provided by the GSWCC with instructor information personalized.

Subcontractor Awareness Seminar Course Notebook

Instructors must provide each attendee with a Subcontractor notebook. GSWCC will provide each instructor with a CD with a ready to print PDF file of the course notebook. There are not specific printing requirements for the course notebook, however, it must be legible and bound.

GSWCC Approved Proctor

GSWCC has established the Proctor Program. Individuals that become GSWCC approved proctors may proctor certification exams for GSWCC approved trainers. Individuals interested in becoming a GSWCC approved proctor must meet the following requirements:

1. At least 18 years of age
2. Must be a resident of Georgia
3. Must provide 3 personal references
4. Must submit a completed *Proctor Application* and *Proctor Affidavit*
5. Must attend an “Approved Proctor Training Session” hosted by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission
6. An individual may not proctor the exam of a:
 - Relative: Spouse, child, (including step-children), siblings (including step-siblings), parents (including step-parents) or any relative, either by blood or marriage, whether living in the employee’s household or not.
 - Business Associate: Direct employee or supervisor
7. An individual may not proctor for an exam they will need to take.

OR

1. Hold current GSWCC Approved Trainer certification.

How to Become a Third Party Approved Proctor

An individual that meets the above requirements and would like to become a GSWCC Approved Proctor must register for an “Approved Proctor Training Session” with GSWCC After attending the training session, the individual will be asked to complete a *Proctor Application* including basic contact information and three personal references and sign the *Proctor Affidavit*. GSWCC will review the application for compliance and will post the individual’s name and contact information will be added to the “Approved Proctor List” and will be posted on the GSWCC website.

Individuals that hold a current GSWCC Approved Trainer certification are not required to attend a proctor training session. A GSWCC Approved Trainer is automatically approved as a proctor.

Arranging for a Proctor

An approved instructor may proctor their own exam or contact an approved proctor and schedule their services for an examination. The approved instructor will be responsible for paying any expenses related to the proctor and the administration of the exam including postage to return the exam. The approved instructor shall notify GSWCC at least 30 days prior to the examination date. The approved instructor will provide the following information to the Conservation Commission:

- Examination date, time and location
- Maximum estimated number in attendance
- Name of scheduled proctor

Proctor Responsibilities

Exam Security

Exams used in the certification program are secure, proprietary instruments published by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Any disclosure or dissemination of actual exam items to any person will be considered a violation and may severely undermine the value of the exam and adversely affect the validity of

exam results. The confidentiality of exam questions and answers is paramount in maintaining the integrity and validity of the exam. Therefore, the Conservation Commission and its approved proctors must take every step to assure the security of the exam instruments.

When an exam has been scheduled by an approved instructor, the Conservation Commission will mail an examination package to the identified approved proctor at least three (3) business days prior to the examination date. The examination package may be sent to either the proctor's home or business address.

It is essential that all exam materials remain secure. That is, when the materials are not being used for testing, those materials should be kept in a secured location. Proctors may not open the examination package prior to administering the exam.

Examination Procedures

When administered by a trainer or by an approved proctor, the following policies and procedures are to be followed when administering the certification exam.

Examination procedures must be reviewed before the examination may begin. Approved proctors must use the PowerPoint presentation developed by the Conservation Commission to explain examination procedures.

Prior to beginning the examination procedures, the proctor should review the seating arrangement, making sure that spacing between individuals prevents them from sharing answers. The proctor should help provide an adequate testing environment that is free from interruption. Proctors must request that cell phones, pagers, PDAs, etc. are turned off and removed from tables/desks.

Proctors must be completely prepared and familiar with the exam directions before entering any examination session. Proctors should anticipate and be ready to answer questions about the exam procedures but at no time may a proctor comment on examination content. When reading exam directions aloud, proctors must ensure that all students understand what is expected of them. Students must be given the opportunity to ask questions and understand how to mark their answers before they begin taking the exam. However, proctors **MUST NOT** answer questions about specific exam items. They may only repeat the initial instructions about item format, scoring rules and timing. They may also help students with test-taking mechanics but be careful not to inadvertently give clues that indicate the correct answer or help eliminate some answer choices.

The proctor must ensure that adequate and complete sets of materials have been distributed to all students. Students may use course materials to assist them during the examination but cannot be aided by any electronic device such as cell phones, PDAs, calculators or any additional written material.

Proctors must carefully monitor the testing session to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed. It is not acceptable for test administrators to leave the room, visit with another person, read, or ignore activities in the testing session.

When an individual completes the exam the Proctor must:

1. Ask the individual for a government issued photo ID .Forms of identification include driver's license, passport, city or state work ID. The proctor must verify name on the ID matches the name on the application
2. Ensure the individual has completed the answer sheet properly which includes bubbling in the name, ID number, exam version and all exam answers.

3. Ensure the application has been completed and signed
4. Ensure the individual has turned in the application, answer sheet and exam booklet.

When all exams have been turned in, the proctor must account for all exam materials and sign the *Examination Affidavit*.

GSWCC Re-certification Program

GSWCC in consultation with the Stakeholder Advisory Board have established the following guidelines for re-certification:

- Individuals will have the option of attending a GSWCC four hour course or third party approved courses totaling four hours of instruction. There will not be an examination required for re-certification.
- GSWCC will offer a four hour re-certification course for Level IA Fundamentals, Level IB Advanced Fundamentals and Level II Introduction to Design.
- GSWCC courses will be given by GSWCC and GSWCC approved trainers.
- GSWCC will allow third parties to develop training courses that may be used to satisfy continuing education requirements.

Scheduling a Re-certification Course

Trainers are required to notify GSWCC of all scheduled re-certification courses in writing. GSWCC will not accept verbal notifications. Re-certification course notifications can be submitted via fax to 706-552-4486 or by email to certification@gaswcc.org. Additionally, any changes to a scheduled re-certification course must also be in writing.

If a re-certification course is canceled, the canceled course code cannot be used for another re-certification course. Trainers are no longer permitted to hold re-certification courses without notifying GSWCC at least 2 days in advance of the scheduled course. GSWCC will not accept re-certification rosters from an unscheduled course. GSWCC staff will notify course attendees and explain that re-certification credit will not be given because the trainer did not offer an approved course

Re-certification Course Forms

At the completion of the course, the trainer must require all individuals in attendance to record their ID number (DOB and last 4 digits of their Social Security number) and print and sign their name on the Continuing Education Training Roster. The trainer will also be required to complete the Scantron form provided by the E&C Program.

The trainer must issue to each individual attending the course for continuing education credit hours a proof of attendance form which lists the following information:

- Name and Certification ID Number of certified individual;
- Name, place and date of the training course
- Continuing Education course code assigned by GSWCC (code will be listed on the GSWCC website)

- Number of credits assigned by GSWCC
- Signature of the sponsor, in ink.

Appropriate controls must be used to ensure that only attendees who sit for a course receive a certificate and that the certificate awards credit only for the time the attendee actually attended in the course.

Trainers will be provided with change of address forms for individuals who need their re-certification sticker issued to an address other than the one provided to GSWCC at the time of initial certification.

Re-certification rosters must be postmarked or delivered within 48 hours after the course. Re-certification rosters must be sent via a tracking method such as UPS, FedEx, registered certified mail, or return receipt requested.

Re-certification Cards

Individuals will receive a re-certification card that will extend their certification for another three years. The re-certification card will have the individual's name, certification number and the new expiration date. The recertification cards are sent out two weeks prior to expiration.

Policies and Procedures for Third Party Re-certification Courses

GSWCC approved trainer may create their own re-certification course. If an approved trainer is interested in creating his/her own re-certification course the following procedures must be followed:

Advance Notice

Applications for third party re-certification courses must be completed and submitted at least 45 days prior to the commencement of the course to allow sufficient time for review, approval, and return of approval documents to the sponsor. Course applications received less than 45 days before the course date will NOT be approved. Course applications are processed in the order they are received.

Submitting for Approval

The GSWCC approved trainer must submit the Application for Continuing Education Course Approval to the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Education and Certification Program, PO Box 1665, Athens, GA 30603. The request for course approval must include:

- A fully completed Application for Continuing Education Course Approval
- A **detailed** course description with time of training in each subject. Applications without adequate subject detail will be returned.
- A program agenda that includes start/stop times for all topics and breaks. The start and stop times (e.g. 10:00-10:30) for each subject or speaker as well as any breaks or meals must be shown. If the course or activity involves a tour, you must provide an itinerary which includes travel stops and times.
- Copies of all materials that will be used during the course

- A draft copy of the course announcement if one is to be sent to prospective attendees. The announcement must contain the following statement verbatim:

“(Course Title) meets the criteria for a Level (IA, IB or II) continuing education course for the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission and is approved for _____ hour(s) of instruction.”

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed and will be returned to the course sponsor.

Criteria Used for Evaluating Course Offerings

Applications for re-certification courses submitted for credit hours will be evaluated on the basis of subject matter presented and time devoted to the topic. In general, discussions relating to all aspect of erosion and sediment control and land disturbing activities may be considered for approval of credit hours. Examples of acceptable topics include but are not limited to the following:

- Monitoring/Sampling
- NPDES General Permit/GESA
- BMP Installation
- Structural and/or Vegetative BMPs
- Erosion, Sediment and Pollution Control Plans
- Site Inspections

The course must meet the following requirements:

1. Minimum of 1 hour of instruction (excluding breaks)
2. Include time to distribute and review GSWCC program updates (Will be provided by GSWCC)
3. Course must be taught by a GSWCC approved trainer

Approval Process

The course outline and instructor qualifications will be reviewed by the GSWCC Education and Certification Program (E&C Program) and appropriate credit hours will be assigned. The course sponsor will receive a Notice of Course Approval listing the re-certification credit hour(s). Continuing Education credit hour(s) will be assigned on a basis of 1.0 credit per hour of actual course instruction time with a maximum of 4 credit hours. A GSWCC continuing education course code will be assigned for each course. This GSWCC continuing education course code is to be listed on the course certificate which is issued to candidates attending the course for continuing education credit hours.

Individuals that attend courses held prior to GSWCC approval will not be eligible for continuing education credit hours.

Monitoring of Certification Training Courses

The Education and Certification Program reserves the right to monitor re-certification courses for course content, time allocated to topics, etc. As a condition of course approval, sponsors must grant permission for the E&C Program staff to monitor any approved course and waive registration fees for staff monitors. If the actual course is found to deviate significantly from the approved course, the E&C Program staff person may recommend credit hours be changed to reflect the deviation or invalidate the course if necessary.

A list of all approved re-certification courses will be posted on the GSWCC website.

Individuals Seeking Re-certification:

There will be no exam for re-certification. To become re-certified, individuals must attend a course or courses totaling four hours of continuing education. Individuals must attend four hours of continuing education for every certification they wish to renew. Example: If an individual is a Certified Inspector and Certified Plan Reviewer they would need to take 4 hour approved Level IB course and a 4 hour approved Level II course for a total of 8 hours of continuing education. Individuals may check the GSWCC's website at www.gaswcc.georgia.gov for a list of approved continuing education courses.

All approved continuing education courses are required to print the following statement on all advertisements and references:

(*Course Title*) meets the criteria for a Level _____ continuing education course for the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission and is approved for _____ hour(s) of instruction.

Individuals can begin taking continuing education courses 1 year before their certification expires. Any course or courses taken prior to the 1 year mark will not be accepted.

Individuals with 4 or more hours will receive a re-certification sticker, that will extend their certification for another three years, in the mail approximately one week before their initial certification expires. The re-certification sticker will have the individual's name, certification number and the new expiration date. The sticker should be placed on the backside of the current certification card.

Re-certification for GSWCC Approved Trainers:

GSWCC will have a 4 hour continuing education course for all GSWCC Approved Trainers. The courses will cover:

- Revisions to the course material
- Overview of the continuing education courses (re-certification)
- GSWCC program updates
- Q&A
- There will not be an exam for either trainer course.

At the course, trainers will receive any new education course materials. Please note the one year re-certification rule does not apply to approved trainers.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and PDHs

The three main certification courses, IA, IB and II qualify for CEUs and PDHs as follows:

- IA Fundamentals - .7 CEUs or 7 PDHs
- IB Advanced Fundamentals – 1.5 CEUs or 15 PDHs
- II Introduction to Design – 1.5 CEUs or 15 PDHs

CEUs and PDHs must be issued through an accredited University or other certified institutions. Individuals that attend third party courses must contact their Approved Trainer. GSWCC cannot issue CEUs or PDHs to individuals that have attended a third party certification course.

GSWCC Certification Accommodation Policy and Procedures for Individuals with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a person with a disability as:

1. a person with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working; Or
2. a person with a record of such an impairment; Or
3. a person who is regarded as having a disability *(ADA Title III)*

GSWCC will provide reasonable accommodations for certification courses and examinations for individuals that qualify for coverage under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

To obtain reasonable accommodations for certification courses and examinations, individuals must notify GSWCC in writing at least 14 days prior to scheduled course and/or examination.

GSWCC will review all written requests and provide reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis.

Individuals seeking ADA coverage must:

1. Submit a written request to the GSWCC's Education and Certification Program. Written requests must be signed by the individual seeking coverage or by someone authorized to do so on his or her behalf. Written requests must be received at least 14 days prior to scheduled course and or exam. All requests received after the deadline will be rescheduled for the next available course and/ or examination date.
2. Provide appropriate documentation that includes a statement of diagnosis and suggested accommodations to validate request for reasonable accommodations. Documentation must be current and provided by a qualified health professional such as a physician, audiologist, psychologist, psychiatrist, or neuropsychologist.
3. Specify the certification course level, date, location and instructor. For certification examinations, depending on the disability, individuals may be required to take the exam at a GSWCC regional office.
4. Provide personal contact information. Once a written request has been received, the GSWCC will contact the individual to discuss the request. Personal contact information must include a phone number and email address if one is available.
5. Follow up with the GSWCC's Education and Certification Program to confirm that your written request has been received. Individuals must contact the Education and Certification Program at 706 – 542-1840. Individuals should not assume a request has been received.
6. Written requests may be faxed to 706-542-4242 - Attention: Education and Certification OR mailed to: The Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission
PO Box 1665

GSWCC will:

1. Review the written request and determine if the individual qualifies for coverage under the Americans with Disabilities Act. If an individual qualifies, GSWCC will provide reasonable accommodations for the course and/ or examinations. Reasonable accommodations may include but are not limited to:
 1. Handicap accessible facilities
 2. Oral examinations
 3. Extended time limits for examinations
 4. Course material and examination in large print
 5. Qualified interpreter at course
 6. Separate examination rooms
2. Contact and assist the individual with the reasonable accommodation process.
3. Handle all oral exams and time extensions for exams.
4. Maintain records of interactions with the individual related to the administration of accommodations. All requests will remain confidential and be used in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act.

GSWCC Approved Trainers will:

1. Review the written request and determine if the individual qualifies for coverage under the Americans with Disabilities Act. If an individual qualifies, GSWCC will provide reasonable accommodations for the course and/ or examinations. Reasonable accommodations may include but are not limited to:
 1. Handicap accessible facilities
 2. Course material and examination in large print
 3. Qualified interpreter at course
2. Contact and assist the individual with the reasonable accommodation process.
3. Instruct individual to notify GSWCC to schedule special exam accommodations if necessary.

GSWCC Examination Accommodation Procedures for Illiteracy

GSWCC will offer oral examinations to individuals with literacy issues. All oral examinations must be administered by a GSWCC employee at a GSWCC regional office. Individuals seeking oral examinations must submit a written request to the GSWCC's Education and Certification Program. Written requests must:

- be sent by the individual or the individual's direct supervisor
- be signed by supervisor and the individual seeking the accommodation.
- state the reason for the request and what accommodations they are seeking.

Request must be sent to:

The Education and Certification Program
PO Box 1665
Athens GA 30603 -1665
Attention: Administrative Director for Certification

Individuals must follow up with the Administrative Director for Certification at 706-542-1840 to confirm that their written request has been received and schedule a date and location for the exam. Individuals should not assume a request has been received.

Individuals must register for and attend a certification course sponsored by GSWCC or a third party trainer. At the end of the course the individuals must obtain a Proof of Attendance Form from the proctor or trainer. The Proof of Attendance form must be presented to the GSWCC employee at the time of the examination along with a government issued photo ID.

Examination Procedures for Oral Exams

1. The certification exam will be administered in a private room with a GSWCC approved proctor. A Proof of Attendance Form and a photo ID must be presented to the proctor.
2. The approved proctor will assist the attendee in completing the application and answer sheet. The proctor will read the examination rules and ask the attendee to sign both the application and exam booklet.
3. The examination will have a 2 hour time limit. Once the attendee has completed the exam, he/she may leave.
4. The proctor will read the exam questions and answer choices aloud. The proctor will then mark the attendee's response on the exam booklet and answer sheet.
5. The attendee may not use a course notebook to take the exam.
6. The proctor may not assist the attendee with the exam content; this includes but is not limited to:
 - Explaining the exam questions or course notebook material
 - Looking up answers in the course notebook
 - Reading sections of the course notebook to the attendee
 - Comment on the attendee's answer selection
7. The approved proctor will send the application and exam to the GSWCC's Education and Certification Program to be reviewed and scored. The approved proctor must use UPS/FedEx, when sending the back the exams.
8. Once the application has been reviewed and the exam scored, the attendee will be notified of the exam results. If a passing score of 70% or higher was achieved, a certification card will be sent to the individual within 60 days. If a passing score was not achieved, the individual may schedule another oral exam. If the individual fails the exam twice, they must register for and attend another certification course before scheduling another oral exam.

Verification of Lawful Presence

As a result of a law change to O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1, the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission (Commission) is required to obtain a signed and sworn affidavit verifying the applicant's lawful presence in

the United States accompanied by a copy of at least one “secure and verifiable document.” O.C.G.A. § 50-36-1(e).

In determining which affidavit is appropriate, an applicant that is a United States citizen should complete the affidavit with that title (first affidavit). An applicant that is a legal permanent resident should complete the affidavit with that title (second affidavit). An applicant that is a qualified alien or nonimmigrant under Title 8 U.S.C. with an alien number issued by the Department of Homeland Safety or other federal immigration agency should complete the affidavit with that title (third affidavit).

A legible photocopy of at least one secure and verifiable document must accompany the affidavit that is being submitted by an applicant. A “secure and verifiable document” is defined in O.C.G.A. § 50-36-2 as “a document issued by a state and federal jurisdiction or recognized by the United States government and that is verifiable by federal or state law enforcement, intelligence, or homeland security agencies.

A secure and verifiable document shall not mean a Matricula Consular de Alta Seguridad, matricula consular card, consular matriculation card, consular identification card, or similar identification card issued by a foreign government regardless of the holder’s immigration status.

Only those documents approved and posted by the Attorney General pursuant to subsection (f) of this Code section shall be considered secure and verifiable.” Depending on which affidavit an applicant is submitting, there is included on the Checklist at least one type of secure and verifiable document that has been determined by the Georgia Attorney General’s Office as being acceptable to support an affidavit. Once the appropriate affidavit is selected by an applicant and a photocopy of his or her secure and verifiable document has been made, he or she must complete the affidavit and sign it in the presence of a notary public.

An applicant has the option of completing the documentation at the certification or re-certification course, the Commission’s Approved Trainers will be able to notarize the documentation.

Please note that applicants, who take a course prior to obtaining citizenship verification from the Commission, must sign a waiver that states he/she understand that course refunds or certification/re-certification will not be issued if citizenship cannot be verified.

Individuals who elect to take an online re-certification course must complete and submit documentation to the Commission via mail.

For your records, it is recommended that each applicant keep a photocopy of all of the documents that he or she submits to the Commission to verify his or her lawful presence in the United States in case any issue arises as to whether the applicant has submitted a complete and correct copy of what must be provided

Failure to provide the documentation will prevent an Applicant from having his or her certification or re-certification issued and may result in his or her certification being revoked.

Additional Resources

The following documents can be found on the GSWCC website at www.gaswcc.org under Documents.

1. Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975 O.C.G.A. 12-7-1
2. Rules of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission Education and Training Certification Requirements for Persons Involved with Land Disturbing Activities Chapter 600-8-1