WATER OPERATOR DESK

EDUCATIONAL BUSINESS & OPERATIONS PLAYBOOK

The Colorado Contract ORC & Small Public Water System Business Playbook

A Practical, Educational Guide for Certified Operators Building a Legitimate Contract ORC Practice in Colorado

- Six operational modules for a legitimate Colorado contract ORC practice
- Checklists and advisor-discussion worksheets — not legal forms
- Official CDPHE / CCWP tools, dated November 2026
- Clear Operator / ORC vs. licensed PE boundary
- Fictional composite examples only
- Educational publication — not an ORC or consulting offer

Developed in conjunction with a Colorado-certified Class A Water Treatment Operator & ORC — Altitude Water LLC.

First Edition · November 2026 · A Water Operator Desk publication by Altitude Water LLC

Published by Altitude Water LLC (d/b/a Water Operator Desk · Water Operator Math) (https://wateroperatorcert.com, support@wateroperatorcert.com).

Independent educational publication. Not affiliated with CWP/CCWP, OCPO, WWFOCB, CDPHE, U.S. EPA, WPI/ABC, AWWA, or Sacramento State OWP. Not an ORC or consulting offer.

WATER OPERATOR DESK

Contents

FM Copyright, Disclaimers & Professional Shields 2

FM How to Use This Playbook 5

1 Understanding Colorado Small Public Water Systems 7

2 Business Setup & Protection 12

3 Getting Found & Landing Contracts 17

4 Contracts & Scope of Work 22

5 System Onboarding & Compliance Workflow 27

6 Field Operations, Logs & Delegation 32

App. A Operational Checklists & Log Templates 37

A1. System onboarding checklist 37
A2. Official-schedule-driven compliance calendar 38
A3. ORC agreement coverage checklist 39
A4. Daily / weekly / monthly log set 40
A5. Sample chain-of-custody field reminder 41
A6. Sanitary-survey binder contents list 42
A7. Emergency call tree and incident log 43

App. B Attorney, CPA & Insurance-Broker Discussion Worksheets 44

B1. One-page advisor packet 44
B2. Licensed Colorado attorney discussion prompts 45
B3. CPA discussion prompts 46
B4. Commercial insurance-broker discussion prompts 46

App. C Public Resource Directory 48

Official Sources · Verified as of November 2026. Public pages only, cited for reference; confirm current details at the official source.

Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), *CCWP – Operators in responsible charge (ORC)* (as of November 2026). https://cdphe.colorado.gov/ccwp-operators-in-responsible-charge-orc

Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), *CCWP – Contract operators* (as of November 2026). https://cdphe.colorado.gov/ccwp-contract-operators

Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), *Colorado Certified Water Professionals (CCWP)* (as of November 2026). https://cdphe.colorado.gov/water-quality/colorado-certified-water-professionals-ccwp

Source: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), *Water and Wastewater Facility Operators Certification Board* (as of November 2026). https://cdphe.colorado.gov/wwfocb

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), *About Operator Certification* (as of November 2026). https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/about-operator-certification

Independence. Water Operator Desk is an independent educational study resource. Official sources are linked for reference only. Water Operator Desk is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or sponsored by Water Professionals International (WPI, formerly ABC), the American Water Works Association (AWWA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), or the Colorado Water and Wastewater Facility Operators Certification Board. Always confirm current requirements, fees, and exam editions at the official source. Passing a certification exam is not guaranteed.

Publisher. Altitude Water LLC (d/b/a Water Operator Desk · Water Operator Math) · support@wateroperatorcert.com · wateroperatorcert.com

MODULE 1

Understanding Colorado Small Public Water Systems

WHAT THIS SECTION WILL HELP YOU DO

- Tell a Community, Non-Transient Non-Community, and Transient Non-Community public water system apart using the public EPA definitions.
- Explain, at a process level, why a Colorado facility owner designates an Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC) and what certificate match means.
- Describe how system type changes the operational and owner-communication load a contract ORC should expect.
- State a clear boundary between certified operator / ORC operational duties and licensed Professional Engineer (PE) design or sign-off duties.

This module gives you a shared vocabulary for the systems you are most likely to be asked to serve: homeowner associations and rural subdivisions, churches and workplaces, camps, parks, restaurants, and small community systems. It is educational context, not a monitoring-rule dump and not a substitute for the official classification of any particular facility.

AS OF NOVEMBER 2026

Date-stamped public guidance

Public Colorado / CDPHE / CCWP / OCPO frameworks described in this playbook are summarized as of November 2026. Official pages, forms, portals, requirements, and fees change. Verify current CDPHE / OCPO / CWP / WWFOCB rules, portal URLs, forms, and fees at the time of use. Do not treat a page in this book as a substitute for the current official source.

What counts as a public water system

As of November 2026, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines a public water system as a system that provides water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances to at least 15 service connections, or that regularly serves an average of at least 25 people for at least 60 days a year. Confirm the current official definition at https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/information-about-public-water-systems at the time of use.

Many wells that serve a single home are not public water systems. The moment a well, spring, or purchased-water connection is piped to enough connections or enough people, the owner is in public water system territory — and in Colorado, that territory includes operator certification, a designated ORC, monitoring, and Department oversight. The contract operator's first professional habit is to find out how the Department has classified *this* system, not to guess from a driveway conversation.

FIELD HABIT

Classification is official, not informal

An owner may say “we're just a little HOA well.” The relevant facts are the official system type, facility classification, source classification, and current monitoring schedule. Pull those from current CDPHE tools (Module 5) and verify current CDPHE / OCPO / CWP / WWFOCB rules, portal URLs, forms, and fees at the time of use.

Altitude Water LLC (d/b/a Water Operator Desk · Water Operator Math) · support@wateroperatorcert.com · wateroperatorcert.com
Independent study aid — not affiliated with WPI/ABC, AWWA, EPA, CDPHE, CCWP, or WWFOCB. Educational only — not legal, tax, or PE advice.

FREE SAMPLE EXCERPT — WATER OPERATOR DESK (wateroperatorcert.com) · page 4 of 4

Community, NTNC, and TNC — why the distinction matters

Public EPA materials, as of November 2026, group public water systems into three types. The definitions below are educational summaries of those public categories. Always confirm how a specific Colorado system is classified on its current official monitoring schedule and with CDPHE.

Public system types (educational summary of EPA categories, as of November 2026)

Type	Public definition (summary)	What a contract ORC should expect
Community Water System (CWS)	Supplies the same population year-round — homes, apartment communities, and many HOAs and subdivisions.	Heavier long-term compliance and customer-communication load. The owner typically has Consumer Confidence Report and public-notice duties the ORC may *coordinate* but should not absorb as the owner's legal responsibility.
Non-Transient Non-Community (NTNC / NTNCWS)	Regularly supplies at least 25 of the same people at least six months per year — schools, factories, office buildings, and some churches or workplaces with their own systems.	Often looks “simple” in the well house, but the same people drink the water for months. Monitoring and documentation still have to be defensible, and school or workplace calendars drive access and sampling windows.
Transient Non-Community (TNC / TNCWS)	Serves places where people do not remain long — campgrounds, parks, gas stations, and many restaurants and seasonal facilities.	Numerous, often seasonal, and easy to underestimate. Competent microbiological practice and disinfectant-residual habits still matter. Winterization, opening, and weekend coverage are recurring operational themes.

Sanitary-survey frequency, from public CDPHE inspection guidance as of November 2026: community water systems are routinely surveyed every three years; non-transient non-community and transient non-community systems are routinely surveyed every five years. The Department may inspect more often, including without advance notice, based on water-quality concerns or follow-up. Confirm current inspection guidance at https://cdphe.colorado.gov/dwinspect at the time of use.

Why Colorado owners designate an ORC

As of November 2026, the public CCWP Operators in Responsible Charge page describes the core qualification and duty framework. The designated ORC must be designated by the owner of the facility or system, and must hold a current certificate in the same category, at the same or higher level, as the system or facility classification. Publicly stated duties include responsibility for operation and maintenance of the facility; knowing and understanding the requirements of applicable permits, laws, and regulations; the ability to supervise other operators working in the facility; and responsibility for developing and maintaining a written delegation plan if any tasks or activities are delegated to others. A written agreement between the ORC and the facility owner is required. Official resources on that page include an ORC Hiring and Contracting Guide, a training video (training units are not offered for that video), a template for a permanent (employee) ORC agreement, and a template for a contract ORC agreement.

This playbook **points you to those official templates and pages**. It does not replace them with an Altitude Water contract, and it does not reprint the rulebook. Read the current official page at https://cdphe.colorado.gov/ccwp-operators-in-responsible-charge-orc. Verify current CDPHE / OCPO / CWP / WWFOCB rules, portal URLs, forms, and fees at the time of use.

Public CCWP materials also emphasize owner responsibility: the owner must not allow the facility to be operated without the required certified supervision. Civil-penalty risk for owners is a matter of current official rule and Department practice — cite and read the official pages; do not treat this paragraph as a penalty schedule. Your professional role is to

Altitude Water LLC (d/b/a Water Operator Desk · Water Operator Math) · support@wateroperatorcert.com · wateroperatorcert.com
Independent study aid — not affiliated with WPI/ABC, AWWA, EPA, CDPHE, CCWP, or WWFOCB. Educational only — not legal, tax, or PE advice.