

# Breaking New Ground

## Education and Training Certification Requirements for Persons Involved with Land Disturbing Activity

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# References

- Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975
  - O.C.G.A. 12-7-19
    - *Education and training requirements; required programs; instructor qualifications; expiration of certification*
  - O.C.G.A. 12-7-20
    - *Creation of Stakeholder Advisory Board; responsibilities; procedures*
- Rules of State Soil and Water Conservation Commission
  - Rule 600-8-1
    - *Education and Training Requirements for Persons Involved with Land Disturbing Activity*

# Introduction

In 2003, HB285 amended the Georgia Erosion and Sediment Control Act of 1975

- Created a certification program for individuals involved in land disturbing in Georgia
- Outlined course levels
- Established a Trainer/Instructor program with minimum eligibility requirements
- Created a Stakeholder Advisory Board for oversight

# Who must be certified?

After December 31, 2006 all persons involved in land development, design, review, permitting, construction, monitoring, inspection or any land-disturbing activity shall meet the education and training certification requirements, dependent on their level of involvement with the process as developed by the Commission in consultation with EPD and the Stakeholder Advisory Board.

O.C.G.A. 12-7-19(a)

# Key Players

## GA Soil & Water Conservation Commission

- Non-regulatory agency charged by law to provide information, education and technical assistance to Georgia citizens to better protect the state's land and water resources.
- Charged with developing and administering the certification program in consultation with EPD and SAB.

# Key Players

## Stakeholder Advisory Board

- Established by O.C.G.A. 12-7-20
- Members Appointed by the Governor representing 13 stakeholder groups
- Responsible for working with EPD and the Commission to establish, evaluate and maintain the certification program

# Key Players

## Stakeholder Advisory Board

- EPD
- SWCC
- SWCDs
- DOT
- Municipal governments
- County governments
- Public utilities
- Engineering and design community
- Construction community
- Development community
- Environmental community
- E&SC Overview Council
- Educators

GEORGIA SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

EDUCATION  
STAKEHOLDER  
ADVISORY BOARD

TRAIN THE TRAINER COURSE

REQUIRED COURSES

**LEVEL 1A**  
**FUNDAMENTAL SEMINAR**

CONTRACTORS  
BUILDERS  
SITE SUPERINTENDENTS  
GRADING & UTILITY  
CONTRACTORS  
DEVELOPERS  
MONITORING CONSULTANTS

***1 DAY COURSE W/ EXAM***

**LEVEL 1B**  
**ADVANCED FUNDAMENTAL  
SEMINAR**

REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT  
INSPECTORS

NON-REGULATORY  
INSPECTORS PERFORMING  
REGULATORY INSPECTIONS

***2 DAY COURSE W/ EXAM***

**LEVEL 2**  
**INTRODUCTION TO DESIGN  
SEMINAR**

DESIGN PROFESSIONALS  
PLAN REVIEWERS

***2 DAY COURSE W/ EXAM***

TESTING/CERTIFICATION

TESTING/CERTIFICATION

TESTING/CERTIFICATION

# Level IA: Fundamentals

## Target Audience

Individuals on-site performing land disturbing activity, compliance inspections or monitoring activities.

- Developers
- Builders
- Site Superintendents
- Machine operators
- Monitoring consultants
- Utility Contractors
- Other contractors including plumbers and electricians

# Goal of Level IA

Train individuals as to the applicable laws, requirements, processes and means and methods to effectively control erosion and sedimentation.

O.C.G.A. 12-7-19(b)(1)

# Topics Covered

1. E&S Processes, Factors and Impacts on Environment
2. Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act
3. Stream Buffer Requirements
4. NPDES Permits for Construction Activities
5. Vegetative BMPs
6. Structural BMPs
7. Field Installation and Maintenance of BMPs using an approved Plan

# Level IA: Fundamentals Seminar Eligibility Requirements

- **Course and Exam**
  - Registering for and attending Commission approved and posted “Fundamentals Seminar”
  - Submitting appropriate application form at the time of examination
  - Obtaining a score of 70% or higher on Level IA examination

# Level IA: Fundamentals Seminar

## Eligibility Requirements

- Exam Only
  - Registering for and attending a Commission approved and posted examination session
  - Providing proof of attendance from approved list of courses within 3 years of exam date
    - NPDES Qualified Personnel Workshop
    - Fundamentals of Erosion Control Workshop
    - Other approved “Qualified Personnel” course’
  - Obtaining a score of 70% or higher on Level IA examination

# Level IA: Fundamentals Seminar

- **Who Should Attend: Individuals on-site**

Builders, developers, utility contractors, monitoring consultants, site superintendents, landscape installers, graders, etc.

- **Class Length: One day**

- **Examination: One hour with 50 Questions**

Successful completion of Level IA requirements  
awards *Certified Personnel* status

# Level IB: Advanced Fundamentals

## Target Audience

Regulatory inspectors and non-regulatory personnel contracted to perform regulatory inspections.

- Local issuing authority personnel
  - E&S Inspectors
  - Building inspectors
  - Zoning enforcement
  - Zoning administrators
  - Permitting staff
- EPD staff
- GSWCC staff

# Goal of Level IB

Train individuals as to the applicable laws, requirements, processes and means and methods to effectively control erosion and sedimentation and provide additional details of installation of and maintenance of best management practices for inspectors.

O.C.G.A. 12-7-19(b)(2)

# Topics Covered

1. E&S Processes, Factors and Impacts on Environment
2. Regulations Governing Erosion and Sediment Control
  - Georgia Erosion and Sediment Control Act
  - NPDES Permits for Construction Activities
3. Role of Local, State and Federal Agencies
4. Role of the Inspector: Inspection and Enforcement
5. The Plan and Plan Review
6. What Makes a Good Local Program
7. State Waters Determinations and Stream Buffers
8. BMP Minimum Requirements
9. Structural BMPs
10. Vegetative BMPs

# Level IB: Advanced Fundamentals Seminar Eligibility Requirements

- **Course and Exam**
  - 60-days of experience in field of erosion and sediment control **or** a Level IA certification
  - Registering for and attending a Commission approved and posted “Advanced Fundamentals Seminar”
  - Submitting appropriate application form at the time of examination
  - Obtaining a score of 70% or higher on Level IB examination

# Level IB: Advanced Fundamentals Seminar Eligibility Requirements

- Exam Only
  - 60-days of experience in the field of erosion and sediment control **or** a Level IA Certification
  - Registering for and attending a Commission approved and posted examination session
  - Providing proof of attendance from approved course within 3 years of exam date:
    - Fundamentals of Erosion and Sediment Control Workshop (2 ½ day course)
  - Obtaining a score of 70% or higher on Level IB examination

## Level IB: Advanced Fundamentals Seminar

- **Who Should Attend: Regulatory inspectors**  
City and county inspection and enforcement personnel, EPD Inspectors, Commission employees, individuals contracted to do regulatory inspections
- **Class Length: Two Days**
- **Examination: One hour with 50 questions**

Successful completion of Level IB requirements awards *Certified Inspector* status

# Level II: Introduction to Design

## Target Audience

Individuals involved in the design and review of erosion, sediment and pollution control plans

- Licensed engineers, land surveyors, architects, landscape architects, geologists, foresters and CPESC
- Engineering assistants (CPR)
- CAD operators (CPR)
- NRCS plan reviewers
- City and county plan reviewers

# Goal of Level II

Provide required training to design and review a successful erosion, sedimentation and pollution control plan.

O.C.G.A. 12-7-19(b)(1)

# Topics Covered

1. The Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Act & Guiding Principles
2. NPDES Permit Requirements
3. Requirements for Stream Buffers and Stream Impacts
4. Soils
5. Vegetative Measures for E&S Control
6. Structural Measures for E&S Control
7. Checklist Procedures for Designers and Reviewers
8. Elements of an Effective Plan with Hydrology
9. Sample Plan Review

# Level II: Introduction to Design

## Eligibility Requirements – Design Professionals

- **Course and Exam**

- Proof of licensure in the field of engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, forestry, geology, land surveying or CPESC
- Registering for and attending a Commission approved and posted “Introduction to Design Seminar”
- Submitting appropriate application form at the time of examination
- Obtaining a score of 70% or higher on Level II examination

# Level II: Introduction to Design

## Eligibility Requirements – Design Professionals

- Exam Only
  - Proof of licensure in the field of engineering, architecture, landscape architecture, forestry, geology, land surveying or CPESC
  - Registering for and attending a Commission approved and posted examination session
  - Providing proof of attendance from approved course within 3 years of exam date:
    - Design of Vegetative and Structural Measures for Erosion and Sediment Control
  - Obtaining a score of 70% or higher on Level II examination

# Level II: Introduction to Design

## Eligibility Requirements – Plan Reviewers

- **Course and Exam**

- 6 months experience in the field of erosion and sediment control **OR** a Level IB Certification
- Registering for and attending a Commission approved and posted “Introduction to Design Seminar”
- Submitting appropriate application form at the time of examination
- Obtaining a score of 70% or higher on Level II examination

# Level II: Introduction to Design

## Eligibility Requirements – Plan Reviewers

- Exam Only
  - 6 months experience in the field or erosion and sediment control **OR** a Level IB Certification
  - Registering for and attending a Commission approved and posted examination session
  - Providing proof of attendance from approved course within 3 years of exam date:
    - Design of Vegetative and Structural Measures for Erosion and Sediment Control
  - Obtaining a score of 70% or higher on Level II examination

# Level II: Introduction to Design

- **Who Should Attend: Designers and Reviewers**  
Design professionals, engineering assistants, CAD operators, NRCS plan reviewers, MOA plan reviewers, etc
- **Class Length: Two Days**
- **Examination: One hour with 50 questions**

Successful completion of Level II requirements awards  
*Certified Plan Designer OR Certified Plan Reviewer*  
status depending on eligibility

# Level II: Introduction to Design

## Change of Certification Status

- If an individual is certified as a Plan Reviewer and completes eligibility requirements for a Certified Plan Designer within 3 years...
  - May submit written notice to Conservation Commission requesting change in status
  - Conservation Commission may issue new certification

# Level IA, IB and II Applications

- All applications completed at time of examination
- Applications signed by applicant confirming all information is true
- Incomplete applications returned to applicant resulting in denial of certification
- All applications are reviewed by Commission to determine compliance with eligibility requirements

# Level IA, IB and II Examinations

- An applicant who fails the examination may retake it within one year without attending the course again
- All examinations are timed and open course material
- Passing score of 70% required on all exams
- Applicant who fails the exam twice must take the appropriate course again
- All exams will be proctored by approved proctors
- Instructors must notify the Commission 30 days prior to the examination date

# Level IA, IB and II

## Revocation of Certification

- Grounds for revocation:
  - Fraud or false statements on application
  - Violation of rules
  - Misrepresentation of certification
  - Assisting others in misrepresentation of certification
- Individual will be notified of date and time  
Commission Board will consider revocation
- Individual may be present when Commission  
Board considers revocation

# Trainers/Instructor Guidelines

## Level I Eligibility Requirements

- 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
- Approval by Conservation Commission and Stakeholder Advisory Board
- Successful completion of *Level I Trainer and Instructor Seminar*

# Trainers/Instructor Guidelines

## Level II Eligibility Requirements

- 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 and Experience
  - 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
- Approval by Conservation Commission and Stakeholder Advisory Board
- Successful completion of *Level II Trainer and Instructor Seminar*

# Trainer/Instructor Guidelines

## Application Process

- Submit appropriate application 60 days prior to scheduled course date
- Incomplete applications are returned to applicant
- All applications are reviewed by Conservation Commission staff to determine eligibility for course attendance
  - Notification sent within 30 days of receipt
  - Written appeal must be received within 10 days

# Trainer/Instructor Guidelines

## Course Attendance and Examination

- An applicant who attends the course but fails the examination may retake the exam within one year
- Passing score of 85% required on exams
- Exam is 100 questions with two-hour time limit
- Notification will be sent within 60 days

# Trainer/Instructor Guidelines

## Introduction to Course Procedures

- Approved instructors must provide schedule of courses 30 days prior to date of course with maximum number expected in attendance
- Provided course materials must be strictly followed

# Revocation of Trainer/Instructor Status

- Grounds for revocation
  - Certification obtained through fraud
  - Violation of rules
  - Not demonstrated reasonable care, judgment or application of knowledge and ability in performance of duties
  - Misleading representation during course
  - Unprofessional or immoral behavior relating to certification
  - Aids any uncertified person to practice as a certified person
  - Mentally incompetent
  - Use of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, chemicals, etc that would affect performance

# Revocation of Trainer/Instructor Status

- Revocation Procedure
  - Commission will notify individual of date and time for consideration of revocation and reasons for revocation
  - Individual may appear before Conservation Commission in own defense

# Re-certification Guidelines

- All certifications are valid for 3 years
- Certification will be extended or renewed by attending at least 4 hours of continuing education courses as established by Commission
- Additional guidance will be issued by Spring 2007

# Proctor Program

- Proctors are hired and paid by approved instructors to administer examinations.
- Responsibilities include receiving exams from Commission, giving exam instructions, collecting exam materials and returning exams to the Commission.
- Approved proctors must complete a three hour training session and complete an application.
- Trainers will be provided with a list of approved proctors.

# Total Certifications Issued

As of December 15, 2006

Course Level	IA	IB	II
Total GSWCC Certifications	1,039	493	678
Total 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Certifications	21,834	1,691	1,990
Total Certifications	22,873	2,184	2,668

Questions?