

Agricultural Operation Planning (AOP) Certificate

For Producers of Agricultural Source Materials Preparing Their Own Strategy and Plan

Updated June 2024

Overview of AOP Certificate

You are required to have an Agricultural Operation Planning (AOP) Certificate if you are preparing a Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS) and/or Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) for an agricultural operation that you own, operate or work for as an employee. Your certificate number is required on the NMS/Ps you prepare. Forms used to register a farm operation under the Nutrient Management Act must also include your certificate number.

This Certificate is only valid for producers who are preparing **their own** NMS/P. It does **not** allow you to prepare NMS/P for other farm operators.

Certificates do not expire (effective January 1, 2022)

Core Competencies

The skills and knowledge that are required for the AOP Certificate can be found in the Agricultural Operation Planning Certificate Core Competencies, available at www.nutrientmanagement.ca.

Certificate Requirements

Take Courses

There are two required courses for the AOP Certificate, offered in English and French:

- Introduction to Nutrient Management
- Regulations and Protocols

If you would like to prepare your Nutrient Management Strategy or Plan using AgriSuite, we recommend that you also take the “How to Prepare a NMS&P” course.

You must submit your application for the AOP Certificate within two years of successful completion of the Regulations and Protocols course.

Introduction to Nutrient Management

This course outlines the basic agronomic principles underlying the Nutrient Management Act, 2002 and O. Reg. 267/03.

There are two ways to take this course.

Option 1 – Online version

This version of the course allows you to complete the course at your own pace and convenience (computer and Internet connection required).

Option 2 – Virtual classroom version

This online course is taught over 3 nights in January or February each year. An instructor guides you through the course material, similar to taking the course in-person.

Regulations and Protocols

This course provides an overview of the Nutrient Management Act, including key definitions and requirements of the Act, Regulations and Protocols. The course also reviews the basics of preparing a NMS/P, implementing a NMS/P and compliance under the NMA.

There are two ways to take this course.

Option 1 – Online version

This version of the course allows you to complete the course at your own pace and convenience (computer and Internet connection required).

Option 2 – Virtual classroom version

This online course is taught over 3 nights in January or February, usually shortly after Introduction to Nutrient Management. An instructor guides you through the course material, similar to taking the course in-person.

Course Schedule

To view the course schedule and to register for course, visit www.nutrientmanagement.ca or call Ridgetown Campus at 1-855-648-1444.

Applying for the Certificate

After you have taken the two required courses, complete the application for Agricultural Operation Planning Certificate found at www.nutrientmanagement.ca or login to your NM Account to complete the online application form. If completing the printed form, send the completed application to the address indicated on the form. **You must submit your application within two years of completing the Regulations and Protocols course.** If you wait longer than two years, you will be required to retake the course.

Certificate Conditions

Under section 108 of the Regulation, the Director may issue a certificate subject to any conditions that he/she considers appropriate. This may include conditions that are consented to by the applicant, imposed by a Director, or ordered by the Tribunal.

Refusal to Issue a Certificate

Under s. 109(1), the Director may refuse to issue a certificate if:

- The applicant is in contravention of the Act or this Regulation, or is in breach of a condition of another certificate issued under Part X;
- The applicant is not competent to carry on the activity that would be authorized by the certificate; or
- The past conduct of the applicant affords reasonable grounds for belief that the activity that would be authorized by the certificate will not be carried on with honesty and integrity.

Additional Expectations

Stay Current in Your Field

Certificate holders are expected to keep up to date with the nutrient management legislation and actively pursue additional learning opportunities to remain competent in the field of nutrient management. This may include update sessions offered by OMAFRA. Updates can be found at www.nutrientmanagement.ca.

Performance Guidelines

Performance guidelines have been developed by OMAFRA that go beyond the regulatory requirements, skills and knowledge listed in the core competencies. These guidelines are intended to provide consistent guiding principles for AOP Certificate holders that reflect best management practices for the industry and good professional services to their clients. AOP Certificate holders are encouraged to follow these guidelines in their daily practice. The Performance guidelines are available at www.nutrientmanagement.ca.

Other Considerations

- A pre-approval site visit may be conducted on an NMS/P submitted by the AOP Certificate holder.
- If you choose to hire a consultant to develop the NMS/P for an agricultural operation, the consultant must have a valid Agricultural Operation Strategy or Plan Development (AOSPD) Certificate.
- You are required to have a Non-Agricultural Source Materials (NASM) Plan Development Certificate if you are preparing a NASM Plan for an agricultural operation.

For more information about courses and exam schedules, contact:

University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus:
Telephone: 1-855-648-1444
E-mail: mmcdonal@uoguelph.ca
www.nutrientmanagement.ca

For more information about certification and licensing, contact:

OMAFRA
Telephone: 1-877-424-1300
E-mail: nman.omafra@ontario.ca

The information contained in this document is derived from the Nutrient Management Act, 2002 (NMA) and Ontario Regulation 267/03 (O. Reg. 267/03). Every effort has been made to make it as accurate as possible, but is not authoritative. Please refer to the e-Laws website for the authoritative text of the Act.