

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
EXAMINING BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS, HYDROLOGISTS AND
SOIL SCIENTISTS**

**IN THE MATTER OF RULEMAKING : REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE : CR 24-079
EXAMINING BOARD OF :
PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS, :
HYDROLOGISTS, AND SOIL :
SCIENTISTS :**

I. THE PROPOSED RULE:

The proposed rule, including the analysis and text, is attached.

II. REFERENCE TO APPLICABLE FORMS:

N/A

III. FISCAL ESTIMATE AND EIA:

The Fiscal Estimate and EIA are attached.

IV. DETAILED STATEMENT EXPLAINING THE BASIS AND PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED RULE, INCLUDING HOW THE PROPOSED RULE ADVANCES RELEVANT STATUTORY GOALS OR PURPOSES:

The objective of the proposed rule is to create continuing education requirements for license renewal for professional hydrologists. The board believes continuing education is important for the profession to stay current with knowledge of their field and provide the best possible service for the public. Currently, professional hydrologists do not have continuing education requirements.

The proposed rule creates requirements for continuing education for professional hydrologists. General requirements are added in ch. GHSS 1, and specifics of new continuing education and renewal requirements are added in ch. GHSS 3. In each biennium, professional hydrologists will be required to complete 4 approved continuing education contact hours. The content of the courses must be substantially related to the practice of professional hydrology. A wide variety of courses and activities are allowed. The professional hydrologist section may grant exceptions to the continuing education requirements in the event of extreme hardship for a licensee.

Section 470.03 (1) (b), Stats., states that the examining board shall “[u]pon the advice of the professional hydrologist section, promulgate rules establishing requirements and standards for the practice of professional hydrology by a person who is licensed as a professional hydrologist under this chapter, including a code of ethics that governs the practice of professional hydrology.”

Section 470.03 (2), Stats., states that “[u]pon the advice of the appropriate section of the examining board, the examining board may promulgate rules that establish continuing education requirements that a person must satisfy to be eligible to renew a license that is issued under this chapter.”

V. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND THE BOARD’S RESPONSES, EXPLANATION OF MODIFICATIONS TO PROPOSED RULES PROMPTED BY PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The board held a public hearing on the proposed rule on February 5, 2025. No written or verbal comments were received.

VI. RESPONSE TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

All Legislative Council comments except comments 5c., 5i., and 5j. have been accepted and incorporated into the proposed rules.

Comment: 5c. In SECTION 4, s. GHSS 3.07 (1) (intro.), add a comma before “which”. Also, is the requirement for four total hours of continuing education meant to be 24 hours, as proposed in companion CHR 24-078, s. GHSS 2.08 (1) (intro.)?

Response: The board agrees with the first sentence of the comment, and that change has been accepted and incorporated into the rule. Under the new numbering of the rule, this provision is now s. GHSS 3.07 (2). However, for the question raised by the remainder of the comment, the applicable rule language is written as the board intended. The board and the hydrologist section intend for the requirement to be four continuing education hours per biennium for hydrologists. The board recognizes this requirement differs from the continuing education hours for professional geologists in companion CHR 24-078.

Comment: 5i. In s. GHSS 3.07 (2) (g), consider specifying how much credit authoring is worth. Also, should the agency consider limits on maximum contact hours that may be claimed under this provision, as proposed in companion CHR 24-078, s. GHSS 2.08 (2) (g)?

Response: To the first sentence of the comment, the board would like to rely on the definition of contact hour in s. GHSS 1.02 (4) for the calculation of how much credit is earned for authoring. Under the new numbering of the rule, this provision is now s. GHSS 3.07 (4) (g). To the second sentence of the comment, the board does not feel it is necessary to set a maximum allowed number of hours for authoring, since the total number of hours required per biennium is only four. A licensee authoring a paper would likely earn four or more hours from the activity. The board rejects this comment.

Comment: 5j. In s. GHSS 3.07 (2) (h), consider how this activity relates to the definition of contact hour. The meaning of contact hour is being changed from 50 minutes to one hour in this paragraph. Alternatively, consider amending the definition of “contact hour” to acknowledge that it is not always 50 minutes. Also, should continuing education credit for this activity be limited “, up to 8 contact hours per day”, as proposed in companion CHR 24-078, s. GHSS 2.08 (2) (h)?

Response: The board agrees with the first two sentences of the comment, and that change has been accepted and incorporated into the rule. It is clarified that field trips shall be awarded one contact hour for every 50 minutes of duration, in line with the definition of contact hour in s. GHSS 1.02 (4). Under the new numbering of the rule, this provision is now s. GHSS 3.07 (4) (h). To the last sentence of the comment, the board does not feel it is necessary to set a maximum allowed number of hours for field trips, since the total number of hours required per biennium is only four. A licensee completing a field trip would likely earn close to four hours or more from the activity.

VII. REPORT FROM THE SBRRB AND FINAL REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY ANALYSIS:

N/A

STATE OF WISCONSIN
EXAMINING BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS, HYDROLOGISTS AND
SOIL SCIENTISTS

IN THE MATTER OF RULEMAKING	:	PROPOSED ORDER OF THE
PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE	:	EXAMINING BOARD OF
EXAMINING BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL	:	PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS,
GEOLOGISTS, HYDROLOGISTS AND	:	HYDROLOGISTS AND SOIL
SOIL SCIENTISTS	:	SCIENTISTS
	:	(CLEARINGHOUSE RULE 24-079)

PROPOSED ORDER

An order of the Examining Board of Professional Geologists, Hydrologists, and Soil Scientists to **amend** Chapter GHSS 3 (title), 3.01, 3.02 Note, and 3.06 (10) Note; and to **create** GHSS 1.046, 1.05 (2) (d), and 3.07 to 3.13 relating to Professional Development for Professional Hydrologists.

Analysis prepared by the Department of Safety and Professional Services.

ANALYSIS

Statutes interpreted:

Sections 470.03 (2) and 470.07, Stats.

Statutory authority:

Sections 15.08 (5) (b), 227.11 (2) (a), 470.03 (1) (b), and 470.03 (2), Stats.

Explanation of agency authority:

Section 15.08 (5) (b), Stats., provides that each examining board “[s]hall promulgate rules for its own guidance and for the guidance of the trade or profession to which it pertains, and define and enforce professional conduct and unethical practices not inconsistent with the law relating to the particular trade or profession.”

Section 227.11 (2) (a), Stats., provides that “[e]ach agency may promulgate rules interpreting the provisions of any statute enforced or administered by the agency, if the agency considers it necessary to effectuate the purpose of the statute, but a rule is not valid if the rule exceeds the bounds of correct interpretation.”

Section 470.03 (1) (b), Stats., states that the examining board shall “[u]pon the advice of the professional hydrologist section, promulgate rules establishing requirements and standards for the practice of professional hydrology by a person who is licensed as a

professional hydrologist under this chapter, including a code of ethics that governs the practice of professional hydrology.”

Section 470.03 (2), Stats., states that “[u]pon the advice of the appropriate section of the examining board, the examining board may promulgate rules that establish continuing education requirements that a person must satisfy to be eligible to renew a license that is issued under this chapter.”

Related statute or rule:

Rule in progress GHSS 1 and 2, relating to Professional Development for Professional Geologists (Clearinghouse Rule 24-078).

Plain language analysis:

The proposed rule creates requirements for continuing education for professional hydrologists. General requirements are added in ch. GHSS 1, and specifics of new continuing education and renewal requirements are added in ch. GHSS 3. In each biennium, professional hydrologists will be required to complete 4 approved continuing education contact hours. The content of the courses must be substantially related to the practice of professional hydrology. A wide variety of courses and activities are allowed. The professional hydrologist section may grant exceptions to the continuing education requirements in the event of extreme hardship for a licensee.

Summary of, and comparison with, existing or proposed federal regulation:

None.

Comparison with rules in adjacent states:

Illinois:

Illinois does not require licensure or registration of professional hydrologists.

Iowa:

Iowa does not require licensure or registration of professional hydrologists.

Michigan:

Michigan does not require licensure or registration of professional hydrologists.

Minnesota:

Minnesota does not require licensure or registration of professional hydrologists.

Summary of factual data and analytical methodologies:

The proposed rule was developed by the GHSS Examining Board reviewing Wisconsin Administrative Code chapters GHSS 1 and 3 and making amendments and additions based on current professional hydrology practice.

Analysis and supporting documents used to determine effect on small business or in preparation of economic impact analysis:

The proposed rules were posted for a period of 30 days to solicit public comment on economic impact, including how the proposed rules may affect businesses, local government units, and individuals. No comments were received.

Fiscal Estimate and Economic Impact Analysis:

The Fiscal Estimate and Economic Impact Analysis are attached.

Effect on small business:

These proposed rules will not have an economic impact on small businesses, as defined in s. 227.114 (1), Stats. The Department’s Regulatory Review Coordinator may be contacted at Jennifer.Garrett@wisconsin.gov or (608) 266-2112.

Agency contact person:

Jake Pelegrin, Administrative Rules Coordinator, Department of Safety and Professional Services, Division of Policy Development, 4822 Madison Yards Way, P.O. Box 8366, Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8366; telephone 608-267-0989; email at DSPSAdminRules@wisconsin.gov.

TEXT OF RULE

SECTION 1. GHSS 1.046 is created to read:

GHSS 1.046 Continuing education for professional hydrologists. Professional hydrologists shall comply with the continuing education requirements specified in ch. GHSS 3.

SECTION 2. GHSS 1.05 (2) (d) is created to read:

GHSS 1.05 (2) (d) For late renewal or reinstatement of a professional hydrologist license, further requirements for continuing education are listed in s. GHSS 3.13.

SECTION 3. Chapter GHSS 3 (title) is amended to read:

Chapter GHSS 3

PROFESSIONAL HYDROLOGIST LICENSE LICENSURE AND CONTINUING
EDUCATION

SECTION 4. GHSS 3.01 is amended to read:

GHSS 3.01 Authority and purpose. The rules in this chapter are adopted under authority in ss. 15.08 (5) (b), 227.11 (2), 470.03 (1) (a), 470.03 (2), and 470.04, and 470.07, Stats. The purpose of the rules in this chapter is to interpret basic education, experience, and examination requirements for licensure as a professional hydrologist as specified in ss. 470.04 and 470.05, Stats., and to govern biennial continuing education of professional hydrologists.

SECTION 5. GHSS 3.02 Note is amended to read:

Note: ~~Applications Instructions for applications are available upon request to the Professional Hydrologist Section of the board at 1400 East Washington Avenue, P.O. Box 8935, Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8935; phone (608) 266-2112 or available for download from the department webpage: <http://dsps.wi.gov/Licenses-Permits/Credentialing/Business-Professions>.~~ on the department's website at <http://dsps.wi.gov>.

SECTION 6. GHSS 3.06 (10) Note is amended to read:

Note: ~~Application forms, including the "Supervised Hydrologic Experience" form and the "Peer Evaluation" form are available upon request to the Professional Hydrologist Section of the board at 1400 East Washington Avenue, P.O. Box 8935, Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8935; phone (608) 266-2112 or available for download from the department webpage:~~ on the department's website at <http://dsps.wi.gov>.

SECTION 7. GHSS 3.07 to 3.13 are created to read:

GHSS 3.07 Continuing education requirements. (1) INITIAL APPLICABILITY. Continuing education requirements will begin in the renewal period that starts on August 1, 2026 and ends on August 1, 2028, as specified in s. 440.08 (2) (a) 63w., Stats. Renewal applications due on August 1, 2028 will require continuing education.

(2) GENERAL REQUIREMENTS. Except as outlined in sub. (3), or if granted a waiver under s. GHSS 3.12, every licensee shall complete at least 4 hours of approved contact hours each biennium. The contact hours shall be pertinent to the practice of professional hydrology, which may include scientific, technical, ethical, or relevant managerial content.

(3) NEW LICENSEES. Between the date of initial licensure and the following renewal date specified in s. 440.08 (2) (a) 63w., Stats., a new licensee shall not be required to comply

with the continuing education requirements. A new licensee is required to comply with continuing education requirements beginning in the licensee's first full biennium.

(4) TYPES OF COURSES AND ACTIVITIES. Continuing education credit may be obtained from any of the following courses or activities that are offered by acceptable sponsors or providers under s. GHSS 3.09 (2):

(a) Successful completion of hydrology, natural science, or environmental science related courses, presented by correspondence, internet, television, or video, and ending with examination or other verification processes. These may earn a varying number of contact hours depending on the course duration and course content.

(b) Successful completion of a college or university course in the area of hydrology, natural sciences, environmental sciences, or ethics.

(c) Successful completion of professional hydrology, natural science, or environmental science courses or activities offering contact hours on those topics.

(d) Active participation and successful completion of professional hydrology, natural science, or environmental science programs, seminars, tutorials, workshops, short courses, or in-house courses.

(e) Attending presentations at related technical or professional meetings at which at least 50 minutes is spent discussing professional hydrology, natural science, or environmental science issues, or attending a lecture on those topics, or both.

(f) Teaching courses, activities, or programs on a professional hydrology, natural science, or environmental science topic. Teaching credit is counted for teaching a course or seminar for the first time only and does not apply to faculty in the performance of their regularly assigned duties. Two contact hours will be awarded for every 50 minutes of teaching.

(g) Authoring professional hydrology, natural science, or environmental science related papers, articles, or maps that appear in circulated journals, trade magazines, or published textbooks. Credit is earned in the biennium of publication.

(h) Field trips organized and run by professional or technical societies or in conjunction with meetings, conventions, or conferences. These shall be awarded one contact hour for every 50 minutes of duration.

GHSS 3.08 Compliance. A licensee who fails to meet the continuing education requirements by the renewal date, as specified in s. 470.07, Stats., may not engage in the practice of professional hydrology until the license is renewed based upon verification of compliance with the continuing education requirements.

GHSS 3.09 Standards for approval. (1) To be approved for credit, a continuing education course or activity shall meet all of the following criteria:

- (a) The course or activity includes instruction in an organized method of learning contributing directly to the professional competency of the licensee and pertains to subject matters which integrally relate to the practice of the profession.
 - (b) The course or activity is conducted by individuals who have specialized education, training, or experience and are considered qualified concerning the subject matter of the course or activity.
 - (c) The course or activity provides proof of attendance or certificate of completion.
- (2) The professional hydrologist section may approve sponsors or providers for continuing education courses and activities, including the following:
- (a) Technical or professional societies or similar organizations devoted to hydrologic, natural, or environmental sciences and education.
 - (b) Accredited colleges, universities, or other educational institutions and schools of higher education.
 - (c) Governmental units.
 - (d) Any other provider approved by the professional hydrologist section or its designee.
- (3) The professional hydrologist section or its designee may approve courses, credits, contact hour value for courses, and other methods of earning credit.
- (4) Contact hour credit for college or technical school courses approved by the professional hydrologist section shall be based on the definition of contact hour in s. GHSS 1.02 (4).

GHSS 3.10 Certification of completion, proof of attendance. (1) Each licensee shall certify on the renewal application their full compliance with the continuing education requirements in this chapter.

- (2) The professional hydrologist section may require additional evidence demonstrating compliance with the continuing education requirements, including a certificate of completion, proof of attendance, or documentation of completion or credit for the courses or activities completed.
- (3) A licensee may be subject to discipline by the board for failure to comply with sub. (2).

GHSS 3.11 Recordkeeping. It shall be the responsibility of the licensee to maintain records of continuing education hours for at least 2 biennia from the date on which the course or activity is completed. The recordkeeping may include any of the following:

- (1) The name and address of the sponsor or provider.
- (2) The title of the course or activity and a brief statement of the subject matter.
- (3) Printed program schedules, registration confirmations or receipts, certificates of completion, proof of attendance, examination scores, or other proof of participation.
- (4) The number of contact hours attended for each course or activity and the date and place of the course or activity.

GHSS 3.12 Waiver of continuing education. (1) A licensee may apply to the professional hydrologist section for a postponement or waiver of the continuing education requirements of this chapter on grounds of prolonged illness or disability, or on other grounds constituting extreme hardship. The professional hydrologist section shall consider each application individually on its merits, and the section may grant a postponement, partial waiver, or total waiver as deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

(2) A renewal applicant seeking renewal of a license without having fully complied with the continuing education requirements shall file a renewal application, the required fee, a statement setting forth the facts concerning noncompliance, any supporting documentation, and a request for a waiver of the requirements. These materials shall be submitted prior to the renewal date. If the professional hydrologist section finds from the statement or any other evidence submitted that extreme hardship has been shown, the section may grant a postponement, partial waiver, or total waiver of the continuing education requirements for the applicable renewal period.

(3) A licensee who receives a waiver for continuing education may be required to complete continuing education upon or before the licensee's return to the active practice of professional hydrology as determined necessary by the professional hydrologist section to ensure the ability of the licensee to practice professional hydrology in a safe and competent manner.

GHSS 3.13 Late renewal. (1) A licensee who applies for renewal after the renewal date specified in s. 440.08 (2) (a) 63w., Stats., shall verify to the professional hydrologist section that the licensee has completed continuing education that meets the requirements of this chapter and shall meet the requirements for late renewal specified in s. 440.08 (3), Stats.

(2) Continuing education hours submitted to satisfy this requirement for late renewal shall not be used to satisfy continuing education requirements for a subsequent renewal.

(3) Subsections (1) and (2) pertain to a licensee applying for renewal of their license less than 5 years after its expiration, as stated in s. GHSS 1.05 (1). A licensee who applies for renewal more than 5 years after the expiration date shall still comply with subs. (1) and (2) and meet the requirements for reinstatement as described in s. 440.08 (3), Stats., and ss. GHSS 1.05 (2) (a) and (b).

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE. The rules adopted in this order shall take effect on the first day of the month following publication in the Wisconsin Administrative Register, pursuant to s. 227.22 (2) (intro), Stats.

(END OF TEXT OF RULE)

This Proposed Order of the Examining Board of Professional Geologists, Hydrologists, and Soil Scientists is approved for submission to the Governor and Legislature.

Dated 2/18/2025



Chair

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES Fiscal Estimate & Economic Impact Analysis

1. Type of Estimate and Analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Updated <input type="checkbox"/> Corrected	2. Date September 20, 2024
3. Administrative Rule Chapter, Title and Number (and Clearinghouse Number if applicable) GHSS 1 and 3	
4. Subject Professional Development for Professional Hydrologists	
5. Fund Sources Affected <input type="checkbox"/> GPR <input type="checkbox"/> FED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRO <input type="checkbox"/> PRS <input type="checkbox"/> SEG <input type="checkbox"/> SEG-S	6. Chapter 20, Stats. Appropriations Affected 20.165 (1)(g)
7. Fiscal Effect of Implementing the Rule <input type="checkbox"/> No Fiscal Effect <input type="checkbox"/> Increase Existing Revenues <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase Costs <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease Costs <input type="checkbox"/> Indeterminate <input type="checkbox"/> Decrease Existing Revenues <input type="checkbox"/> Could Absorb Within Agency's Budget	
8. The Rule Will Impact the Following (Check All That Apply) <input type="checkbox"/> State's Economy <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Businesses/Sectors <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government Units <input type="checkbox"/> Public Utility Rate Payers <input type="checkbox"/> Small Businesses (if checked, complete Attachment A)	
9. Estimate of Implementation and Compliance to Businesses, Local Governmental Units and Individuals, per s. 227.137(3)(b)(1). \$0	
10. Would Implementation and Compliance Costs Businesses, Local Governmental Units and Individuals Be \$10 Million or more Over Any 2-year Period, per s. 227.137(3)(b)(2)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
11. Policy Problem Addressed by the Rule The Examining Board of Professional Geologists, Hydrologists, and Soil Scientists would like to create continuing education requirements for license renewal for professional hydrologists. The board believes continuing education is important for the profession to stay current with knowledge of their field and provide the best possible service for the public. Currently, professional hydrologists do not have continuing education requirements. The proposed rule adds requirements for continuing education for professional hydrologists. Definitions and general requirements are added in ch. GHSS 1, and new continuing education and renewal requirements are added in ch. GHSS 3.	
12. Summary of the Businesses, Business Sectors, Associations Representing Business, Local Governmental Units, and Individuals that may be Affected by the Proposed Rule that were Contacted for Comments. The rule was posted to the public for Economic Impact Analysis comments as required, and will be subject to an official public hearing, along with other steps of the rule process.	
13. Identify the Local Governmental Units that Participated in the Development of this EIA. None.	
14. Summary of Rule's Economic and Fiscal Impact on Specific Businesses, Business Sectors, Public Utility Rate Payers, Local Governmental Units and the State's Economy as a Whole (Include Implementation and Compliance Costs Expected to be Incurred) DSPS estimates a total of \$6,000 in one-time costs for implementing this rule. The one-time staff costs support 0.1 limited term employee to undertake such tasks as legal review, rule drafting, amending renewal application forms, updating website, create training materials, training staff, creating new requirements in License, and revising operating procedures.	
15. Benefits of Implementing the Rule and Alternative(s) to Implementing the Rule The benefit of the rule is that professional hydrologists will continuously improve their knowledge of the field and industry practices through continuing education. This is in line with the many other professions that require continuing education to practice in Wisconsin. It upholds the high standard of professional service and public safety we have in	

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES Fiscal Estimate & Economic Impact Analysis

Wisconsin. If the rule does not go forward, hydrologists will continue not to need continuing education for license renewal.

16. Long Range Implications of Implementing the Rule

The long range implication of implementing the rule is the field of licensed professional hydrology will maintain a high standard in the state of Wisconsin.

17. Compare With Approaches Being Used by Federal Government

None.

18. Compare With Approaches Being Used by Neighboring States (Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Minnesota)

Illinois:

Illinois does not require licensure or registration of professional hydrologists.

Iowa:

Iowa does not require licensure or registration of professional hydrologists.

Michigan:

Michigan does not require licensure or registration of professional hydrologists.

Minnesota:

Minnesota does not require licensure or registration of professional hydrologists.

19. Contact Name	20. Contact Phone Number
Jake Pelegrin, Administrative Rules Coordinator	(608) 267-0989

This document can be made available in alternate formats to individuals with disabilities upon request.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES
Fiscal Estimate & Economic Impact Analysis

ATTACHMENT A

1. Summary of Rule's Economic and Fiscal Impact on Small Businesses (Separately for each Small Business Sector, Include Implementation and Compliance Costs Expected to be Incurred)

2. Summary of the data sources used to measure the Rule's impact on Small Businesses

3. Did the agency consider the following methods to reduce the impact of the Rule on Small Businesses?

- Less Stringent Compliance or Reporting Requirements
- Less Stringent Schedules or Deadlines for Compliance or Reporting
- Consolidation or Simplification of Reporting Requirements
- Establishment of performance standards in lieu of Design or Operational Standards
- Exemption of Small Businesses from some or all requirements
- Other, describe:

4. Describe the methods incorporated into the Rule that will reduce its impact on Small Businesses

5. Describe the Rule's Enforcement Provisions

6. Did the Agency prepare a Cost Benefit Analysis (if Yes, attach to form)

- Yes No
-