

# **NDEP Drinking Water Operator Certification Program**

## **NvRWA Conference March 8, 2011**

**Jennifer L. Carr, P.E., C.E.M.**

**Chief, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water**

**Kelly McGowan, Environmental Scientist  
BSDW Operator Certification Program**





# Overview

## Presentation Agenda

- Meet Kelly McGowan – Your New Operator Certification Program Contact
- New DW Operator Applicants
- Renewal Applicants
- General “News You Can Use”
- Where We’d Like the Program to Be





# Program Staffing/Notes

*Happy to Introduce Mr. Kelly McGowan*

Your New Operator Certification Program  
Contact – Technical Questions

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Nan Paulson is still the Administrative  
Assistant Program Contact





# Program Staffing/Notes

*Building “Capacity” & “Sustainability”*

*Why do you do what you do?*





# New Test Applicants

## Application Notes:

Before you apply, check out our webpage!

[http://www.ndep.nv.gov/bsdw/cert\\_home.htm](http://www.ndep.nv.gov/bsdw/cert_home.htm)





# New Test Applicants

## Application Notes:

- Fill out the form *completely*
  - ◆ Answer the “Red” question, sign it
- *Sell yourself* – What we see on the App is what we know about you!
- YOU need to review it before you sign it –  
*Especially if someone filled it out for you*
- Keep a copy of what you submitted





# New Test Applicants

## Application Notes:

- Forms have limitations – use extra paper
  - ◆ Attach Transcripts for post-secondary proof
  - ◆ Attach Certificates for post-secondary proof
- Choosing OIT vs. Full – when in doubt, *call*
- You want to hold a lot of OIT's? Don't forget about Contact Hour Requirements.





# New Test Applicants

## Application Notes:

- Late Apps are not accepted
  - ◆ Check Website for Application Deadlines  
[http://www.ndep.nv.gov/bsdw/test\\_dates.htm](http://www.ndep.nv.gov/bsdw/test_dates.htm)
  - ◆ Mail in plenty of time for us to receive it (or use e-payment & e-mail/fax in your app)





# New Test Applicants

## Application Notes (A Little Deeper):

- Post-Secondary Education Required for Grade 3's & 4's
  - ◆ Grade 3 = 2 x 36-hour classes (72 minimum)
  - ◆ It's the HOURS that count, not the # of courses
  - ◆ i.e. (1) 90-hour Sac State CSU correspondence course satisfies the requirement
  - ◆ Grade 4 = 4 x 36-hour classes (144 minimum)





# New Test Applicants

## Application Notes (A Little Deeper):

- Post-Secondary Education Required for Grade 3's & 4's
  - ◆ The requirements only have to be satisfied once.
  - ◆ i.e. if you have your D-4 and you are applying for your T-3, you don't have any more Post-Sec requirements to satisfy.





# New Test Applicants

## Application Notes (Even Deeper):

- Grade Requirements (per Regulations)
  - ◆ It **IS** possible to max out your ability to go further
  - ◆ We can only approve 1 Grade Higher than the PWS you work at
  - ◆ i.e. if you work at a D-2 facility, you can only go to a D-3





# New Test Applicants

## Application Notes (Even Deeper):

- How Do We Determine a “PWS Grade”?  
(a.k.a. How we know what you qualify for)
  - ◆ Regulations define the # points we give for various PWS elements
  - ◆ Points are added & fall in one of 4 ranges that determine the grade.
  - ◆ Excel Spreadsheet – can be shared



# New Test Applicants

## Application Notes (Even Deeper):

- We apply your Experience Percentages
- Example:
  - ◆ Tim Smith has 2 years of experience at Joe's Water Supply with: 25% Roads, 50% Water Distribution, 25% Wastewater Treatment
  - ◆ Tim is applying for a D-3 (needs 2 yrs in Dist.)
  - ◆ Does he have enough?
  - ◆ How long until he can apply for his T-1?





# Renewal Applicants

## Renewal Applicants:

- Common Application Issues
  - ◆ Page 2 is Missing(Contact Hour list & Signature)
  - ◆ Contact Hours are too old (can only be from the 2 year period that renewal card is active)
  - ◆ 1 Application form is submitted for 2 different Certificates



# Renewal Applicants

## Renewal Applicants:

- You *Cannot* Use the Same Contact Hours for Different Certificates!
- Contact Hours vs. “CEUs”
  - ◆ 1 Official CEU = 10 Contact Hours
- Contact Hours are Required for ALL Active Certificates (i.e. All Full & OITs Held)





# Renewal Applicants

## Renewal Applicants:

- Safety Training is important for so many reasons – but can only be used for a maximum of 2 ½ hours for Renewals.
  - ◆ OSHA 10/30, Shoring, Confined Space, etc.
  - ◆ *Not* CPR, First Aid, Defensive Driving, etc.





# Renewal Applicants

## Renewal Applicants (A Little Deeper):

- If you use the same trainer (NvRWA, UNR, WWET) try and mix it up – don't take the same class every 2 years.
- We *Prefer* to see specialization, if you can
  - ◆ i.e. Distribution classes vs. Treatment classes
- OIT certificates *Cannot* be Reinstated if you don't get enough hours – you have to re-test



# Renewal Applicants

## Renewal Applicants (A Little Deeper):

- Cool New Tool
  - ◆ Web-calendar of Approved Contact Hour Classes (Demo at Thursday's Forum Meeting)

The link is on our main webpage at:

[http://www.ndep.nv.gov/bsdw/cert\\_home.htm](http://www.ndep.nv.gov/bsdw/cert_home.htm)





# News You Can Use

- Water System Staffing
  - ◆ As systems grow & become more complex, Operator specialization occurs – that's Okay
  - ◆ i.e. Arsenic Treatment Plant Operator vs. Surface Water Treatment Plant Operator
  - ◆ i.e. D-3 Fitter vs. D-3 in full Responsible Charge
- Have a good staffing plan *before* we find problems



# News You Can Use

- US EPA Enforcement Strategy has changed – Looking for “Timely and Appropriate” responses by the States
- NDEP is doing more Formal Enforcement to put PWSs on a “Path to Compliance”
- US EPA is working on updating Rules and adding more regulated contaminants (new MCLs)



# News You Can Use

- Nevada Certified Drinking Water Operator's Forum Webpage
  - ◆ <http://ndep.nv.gov/dwo/index.html>
  - ◆ New training & activities calendar
  - ◆ New link to a Facebook DW Op's Discussion group
- Come to Thursday's Meeting for Demos!



# Where We'd Like to Be

- On-Line Applications
  - ◆ Reduce Data Entry and Increase Processing Speed
- Electronic Testing
- Better Definition of Contract Operators
  - ◆ What are NDEP's Expectations for Contract Operators *in Responsible Charge* of a PWS?
  - ◆ List of "Approved" Contract Operators on Web

# Where We'd Like (YOU) to Be

We highly recommend Operators maintain their own files of professional certification history & records

~~It's your license, It's your *livelihood*~~

Keep your Certificates, Keep your Application Copies, Keep your Transcripts, Keep your Training Records, Keep it all where you can FIND it!

# BSDW Op Cert Program Contact Information

- Jennifer L. Carr, P.E., C.E.M., Chief
  - ◆ [jcarr@ndep.nv.gov](mailto:jcarr@ndep.nv.gov) 775-687-9515
- Kelly McGowan, Environmental Scientist
  - ◆ [kmcgowan@ndep.nv.gov](mailto:kmcgowan@ndep.nv.gov) 775-687-9527
- Nan Paulson, Administrative Assistant
  - ◆ [npaulson@ndep.nv.gov](mailto:npaulson@ndep.nv.gov) 775-687-9447

## Notes for Drinking Water Operator Certification Program presentation

### Slide 1

Good morning,,,,,

I didn't bring copies of the presentation, but it will be

Up on the DW Op Cert Forum webpage by the end of the week

### Slide 3

Contact info is included on my last slide

### Slide 4

EPA's latest buzz-words - come to life

Cap Dev (TMF) Re-Energizing Workgroup

I love my job because I feel like I make a difference.

You do too - every day.

Encourage you to really think about "what I did today to make

My community a safer place"

### Slide 5

Even if you've applied before, you'll find useful information,

Tips, notes, test stats, what to study, regulatory items,

test dates & deadlines, app forms

& much, much more!

### Slide 6

KEEP COPIES of what you submitted - if we call with questions, you need to know

What we are talking about.

Sell yourself - do you have a resume? Not really necessary - you can type up a separate

Sheet to attach - anything that helps us know more about what you do

And how long you've been doing it!

### Slide 7

Transcripts can be unofficial University printouts (embossed stamp not req'd)

ALWAYS attach your certs! It takes A LOT of time to go digging for your old

Paperwork if you didn't attach them. EACH application needs to be complete.

OIT vs. Full - we can't always make a determination over the phone if you

are "close", but we can start the discussion. If you apply for a Full, but don't

Qualify, we do not do partial refunds.

Regulations state that Contact Hours have to be maintained for all active certs.

(if you have a D-1 F, a D-2 OIT, a T-1 F & a T-2 OIT = 20 hours!)

### Slide 8

Late apps will be processed for the next available exam.

(but we will call & tell you it was not received on time)

### Slide 9

We have conversion charts for college semester hours to

BSDW Post-Secondary hours.

### Slide 11

Regulations require that we re-rank PWS facilities for the

Operating grade every 3 years. We are starting to track that

Better in our database. As that data becomes more complete, we

Are able to cross-check applications with the experience level you are Getting.

\*\*\* Unfortunate example\*\*\*

### Slide 13

I = 6 mos

II = 1 yr

III = 2 yrs + 72 hrs post-sec

IV = 4 yrs + 144 hrs post-sec

### Slide 16

I made a determination made last fall when OSHA 10/30 was a big question  
Used to approve as much as 50% - but 50% for a 3 or 4 was 5 hours and  
Only 2 ½ hours for a 1 or a 2 ..... More important for 3's & 4's to focus  
That much more on real T & D classes and not rely on safety.

### Slide 17

Some trainers offer the same classes every 2 years.

Get crazy - mix it up!

Provisionals cannot be reinstated either!

### Slide 18

There's that webpage address AGAIN!

Approved classes will be added regularly

Calendar includes test dates & application deadlines

Another listing of DVD or web-based Contact Hour classes

Is being developed and will be posted

### Slide 19

Operator questions, thoughts, concerns and complaints have been

Coming up about why certain people are qualified

Thoughts about specialization - we certify that experience at a

Certain water system grade is being achieved and that the applicant

Has the KSA's to move up.

It is up to any future EMPLOYER to determine if any one individual

Is qualified for the job they have to offer

Just because someone has many years of experience at a T-3 Arsenic

Plant, it does NOT mean they are fully qualified to operate a T-3 SWT plant

- That is beyond the scope of our program, and we have to rely on the  
Employer to make good hiring decisions.

A D-3 Pipe Fitter may not be fully capable of being in Responsible Charge

Of a D-3 system on his own - that's OKAY

In really big systems, a Dist Operator may be an electrician

(wiring pumps, SCADA, solar)- that's okay!

Staffing - Regulations specify the # and type of operators needed for

Increasing grades of plants - have a good staffing plan BEFORE we find

A deficiency, or worse, before there is a health-based problem!

### Slide 20

EPA = ERP/ETT

NDEP = EmBer, AOC's for Arsenic,

AO's when necessary (with fines & penalties contemplated)

### Slide 21

Webpage - want it to be a useful "go to" site for operators  
YOU can submit information that you think will be beneficial for your colleagues  
Thursday morning meeting for the Forum & the Nevada Water and Wastewater  
Training Coalition

### Slide 22

On-line apps:

A year ago, this wasn't possible - new BWPC NPDES De Minimis  
Discharge Permit is now an on-line application. With time, we will explore  
The possibilities in being able to do that with Op Cert - no timelines or  
Promises, except that we'll look into it's feasibility & how much it would  
Cost to program.

Electronic Testing - AWWA is getting closer (about a year behind  
Intended schedule).