



Nevada Water and Wastewater Operator's Forum

Hosted by: Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water
901 South Stewart Street, Suite 4001, Carson City, NV 89701

Meeting Minutes Tuesday, December 2, 2014 – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Location: Richard H. Bryan Building,
Tahoe Hearing Room on the 2nd Floor
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, NV 89701

Videoconference NDEP Las Vegas Office, And Great Basin College
Red Rock Conference Room 1500 College Parkway
2030 E. Flamingo Rd., Ste 230 McMullin Bldg., RM MH110
Las Vegas, NV (by the library)
Elko, NV 89801

Phone conference to: 1-888-363-4734, access code 1515199

Agenda

- 1) **Call to Order and Introductions. (Mike Aritzia)** The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m.

Forum Members Present: Mike Aritzia, SVGID; Harvey Johnson; Max Sosa, NDEP/BSDW; Jennifer Carr, NDEP/BSDW; Bob Foerster, NvRWA; Ron Penrose, TMWA; Nathan Adams, Pioche.

Introductions and Guests: Will Raymond, TMWA; Daralyn Dobson, NDEP/OFA; Adam Jones, Comstock Mining; Sherwin Gormly, NDEP/BSDW.

Las Vegas: Richard Giltner, SNWA.

Elko: Dale Johnson, City of Elko.

Appearance by Phone: Cameron McKay, KGID; Jennifer McMartin, NWEA; Byron Brice, Marigold Corp; Michelle Cuellar, Marigold Corp.

- 2) **Approval of Forum/NTC Minutes from December 2, 2014. – Action Item**

Cameron - Moved to approve.

Harvey - Seconded the motion.

- 3) **Drinking Water Exam Results Review from October 1, 2014. (Max Sosa)**

Max –We had 122 applicants for the October, 2014 test. There was a 68% passing rate which dropped by 2% from the last time, 83 passed out of 122. Overall combined there was improvement by operators preparing for the exam. A not mastering category was not reported by AWWA in the summary report. There is always room for improvement. I asked AWWA to list deficient topic

area as partial mastering rate. These areas can be reviewed for further fine tuning for training. Grd 1 did very well. D1, 37 passed and 6 failed. T1, 12 passed and 3 failed. As for Grd 2 half of the operators that tested for distribution failed, 8 out of 11 failed in treatment. Grd D3, 3 passed out of 12. Expressed concern. One D4 which passed and T3 one passed and 1 failed. Any comments or ideas, what to do about Grd 2 and 3?

Harvey – Did any of the Grd 2's and Grd 3's call in and ask?

Max – A couple operators from Elko did call. They commented what was on the test is not what they covered.

Harvey – It wasn't a lack of training but a lack of studying?

Max – One had thought he did well and surprised by his score.

Bob – At another time get actual results so he can measure his training outcomes.

Max – Any other suggestions?

Michelle – Took the D2 exam in March 2014. Studied for months and barely passed with a 73%. Realized a lot of the questions were technical, i.e., pumps, pipes, fittings. I was advised to focus on pumps, pipes, fittings as well as fire hydrants, etc. Items studied were not covered on the test. How can we altered the training on the level 2 to get a handle on more of the technical questions related to level 2 operators?

Max – Do you recall anything in particular since referring to technical questions? What type? Math? Hydraulics?

Michelle – Not difficult but less than expected as far as math questions. Pump curves. Questions on color of the hydrants thought that it should be a level 1 question. Questions seemed scattered. Need to know the broad spectrum, also treatment questions with the distribution exam.

Bob – Characterize the technical questions being specific in reference to a pump, a component of the fire hydrant.

Michelle – Turbine pumps compared to other types of pumps.

Bob – We need to encourage people to flag those by protesting the treatment questions. Weed those out of the Distribution test. Not right.

Byron – Took the March 2014 exam as well and noticed about 10 to 12 treatment questions.

Bob – Don't believe there is a mechanism to review the treatment questions and picked those out of the distribution test.

JM – Discussed process for exam development and how to protect questions (i.e., Treatment questions on Distribution exams). Cannot remove questions (legality) Protests are received by ABC exam committees. Develop new exam should be available by end of 2015.

Cameron – It depends on the nature of the questions. For example ph adjustment and chlorine could be taken as a treatment question. Can go a lot farther in the treatment questions.

Michelle – Agreed that certain treatment questions need to be on distribution exams. Note that the operators will study from the distribution handbook and other materials to take the D1 test which is not enough, you also need to look at the basics of the treatment study materials.

Bob - Jennifer McMartin comments on the pass/fail results for the Waste water exams.

JM – Reviewed by Jennifer McMartin – Over all the passing rate for all of our certification exams is 44%. Just for Wastewater is 50% pass, Grd 1, will not receive a full certification, 40% pass, Grd 2, 23% pass Grd 3 and 27 % pass Grd 4. The higher grade level certification where people are struggling. There is training but people are not taking the time to study. Web-cast offered and computer passing rates are a little higher.

Ron – Take a look at the “Need to Know Criteria” on the website, which is differentiated by treatment, distribution and by grade level. Compare that vs exam content. AWWA and ABC involved with the reviews to see if the Need to Know Criteria is matching up with exam content. If not, there needs to be an adjustment to the training. There needs to be a dialog with the Cal/NV section and ABC where the exams are coming from, make sure The Need to Know Criteria. The topics being studied needs to coincide with what’s on the exam.

Max – If the test has been modified, then the Need to Know Criteria would need to be modified. AWWA and ABC needs to update NDEP/BSDW Operator Certification Program.

JC – Need to look at various web postings of need to know criteria and point all to ABC? The concern is the type of treatment questions showing up on the exams and the study criteria. Max volunteered to make sure to look into Ron’s suggestion concerning ABC.

JM – ABC does have posting of the Need to Know Criteria.

Mike – Doesn’t appear to be an issue with the questions but the content of the text.

JC – The concern seems to be the content of the studying and the need know criteria and that matches up, and the other is too many and the type of treatment questions showing up on distribution test.

Bob – Can see chlorination questions on a distribution test, but not fluoride or filtration or anything else.

Mike – When taking the certification test in the past there would be treatment on the distribution test, questions on chlorination for tanks and for new lines. It doesn't sound like anything new but what technical level they are.

Bob – Should align with Nevada policies from disinfection is part of distribution test. Anything else is treatment.

Dale – People may be confused between water quality parameters and sampling verses water treatment or maybe drinking water regulations thinking its water treatment questions?

Mike – Still doing exit survey at the end of testing? Are those getting filled out?

Ron – It's available. Not able to check every exam. They have the opportunity to comment on specific questions. Most of the examinees, once done with the exam they don't want to spend much time, burned out after test. A question of needed on criteria studying. Does it make sense and is it consistent with the exam content? That's what should be analyzed.

4) Training Needs / Forum Input

Mike - Is there any training needs anyone would like to be provided by the state?

Bob – Majority request are reviewed classes. Doing management classes. Effective Utility Management followed the EPA document. No new topics.

Mike – Results of the last testing, needs for training. Outside of the AWWA and ABC arena is there an opportunity within NDEP or the forum members? We have the names of the people that have taken the test maybe send out our questionnaire after the fact “You have recently taken a distribution, treatment or wastewater test, what are some comments you have, issues or maybe some areas that you would like to see to help with the testing”? That way they are out of the test mode not burned out for that day. The results would come in to us or the state however anyone would want to work it. Get a better idea what the needs are within the state or areas to focus on training.

JC – Op Cert Program/NDEP could do the mail out possibly by e-mail, if there is a list of questions.

Bob – Can do a survey monthly. Will work on questions. Start a list and send it around. Then Max will send to the next person.

Mike – We can get a better idea from the actual people that are taking the test where they have issues and training opportunities.

Max – Will get with ABC and AWWA and see on their need to know criteria. Will get with Bob.

Mike – Any other comments or recommendations for training?

JC – Over the course of 2015 the Safe Drinking Water program will start doing rules specific training for the Revised Total Coliform Rule (RTCR) that will be implemented April 1, 2016. It will apply to every public water system. Completed workshops for the Regulation adoption. There will official training road show over the course of 2015.

Bob – NvRWA Conference is the week of March 20th. Welcomes any input anybody has for course training, vendors that you would like to see on their equipment, wide open.

5) NDEP Updates (Max Sosa, Bureau of Safe drinking Water)

Max – Ron Penrose retiring effective 12/31/2014. Will Raymond with TMWA will be taking over.

Ron – Appreciates having the opportunity being the exam administrator, the friendships and the professional relationships will be missed. Looking forward to doing other things. Will, will do a good job. He has worked at TMWA for many years. He has a passion for public water and water treatment and works well with people. I do attend to stay professionally active, but at least take one month off.

Mike – Will be missed by the Forum members but also the community. Looking forward to working with Will Raymond.

Cameron – Thank you, for all your service with the examinations.

Harvey – Thank you to, for all the work you have done.

Bob – It was good working with you. Not easy to administer the exams, you make it look easy, a lot behind the scenes.

JC – Constant stable presence for a very long time. You will be missed.

Ron – Contact with all of the rural locations as well. All the proctors. I realize life is different there. Hopefully we have been pretty flexible and stable.

Max – Big help to us. Thank you.

Will – You make look easy, I have big shoes to fill. Appreciate your professionalism. Ron is a big 49er's fan and Giants fan. We clashed, by me being a Dodgers fan. You're a rock. Appreciate the time you put into it. You are welcome to come back anytime.

JC – If anyone missed the workshops, we are adopting the RTCR and the new definition for lead free tomorrow. The revised RTCR adoption went smoothly. A lot of discussion of what it means to be lead free, particularly in regard to are attempts to prevent backsliding on the hydrants that are service saddle and gate valves greater than two inches. Because there exempted from the definition in federal rule. We've done more research, many hours of discussion since the workshops in house in regards on the best way to address the eight percent requirement for hydrants. It turns out that there is no way to inforce that requirement because, used to be handled under the NSF61 but NSF61 has changed. As a result of the federal act changing. There is no way for a water system or NDEP to identify weather or not to say a hydrant needs an 8% lead level. Chances are they always have and do because that requirement used to be covered under NSF61 so assuming the hydrant manufactures don't change their manufacturing processes there shouldn't be an issue going forward, so the definition of lead free won't apply to hydrants it would be specifically exempted based on what we are going to present tomorrow (12/3/14). The other thing we considered leading in which is actually covered by existing regulations is

the fact those devices do still have to meet the NSF61 for leaching if we to scrutinize the mint mark of those sorts of things on any of those exempted devices they should still meet NSF61, they always needed to meet NSF61 for leaching requirements and they still will. The existing requirements that we have we feel covers concerns. Potential of the devices to leach lead because NSF61 requires the devices not exceed 5 parts per billion of lead once it goes through the testing process. NSF as seen more and more manufactures of hydrants. In particular coming into NSF certification of their units and they do have a listing there. We haven't researched u/l specifically but NSF has many manufactures that has NSF61 certification including our local one, AVK manufacture here in Nevada. I think while we were trying to protect against backsliding public health is still protected for the times when hydrants are used for transition. The different issue is the fact it shouldn't be in for that but when they are we think that folks will still be protected. That's what's going to happen tomorrow (12/3/2014)

Mike –The rule is if anything that is currently in the ground, is okay when you replace or insert spare parts that they have to be federally required?

JC – That is correct. So were adopting the new federal definition of lead free as written by congress in 2011 of the .25 percent the parameter that complicated that's now in NSF NC standard 372 which also is adopted.

Mike – As far as distributor's repair parts and parts in general is there a requirement for them to comply what they sell?

JC – The authority I have is to regulate water systems not manufactures or distributor's it does behoove the water system to ensure what they are procuring has the NSF372 or NSF61G mid mark on it. When we inforce the law that's what we would be looking for on the packaging. Current inventory on hand is not useable unless it has the NSF61G or NSF372 product certification

6) NWEA Updates (Harvey Johnson)

Harvey –Stepped down as chairman. Adrian Edwards took over, Joe Crim is still Vice Chairman and Leanna Russo is now secretary. We were re-working the Veterans MOS to job credit. Is it on the web-site?

JM - In process of adopting a policy. The policy has not been approved yet. Basically were going to grant 6 months of experience for any Veterans that have an MOS that is listed on the EPA document, an addition to that they have a lean and experience policy they would need the experience for a full grade 1 for drinking water.

7) Waterlines Publication (All Attendees)

a) Review of Prior Issue

Mike - Any feedback or comments on the last waterlines that went out?

None

b) Article Assignments for next Edition

Mike – Any suggestions for the next publication which is?

Daralyn - July 2015

Bob – Talking with people who recently took the grade 1 test and how they go into the industry what attracted them how they studied and lessons learned for other people that would want to get into the industry. Was discussed last May 2014. Do we have a facility in mind that we can do Water?

Mike – Anybody have a system that has done some improvements or new facilities, new treatment, technics or technologies that you would think be a good utility to hi-light in the next water line article?

Cameron – Probably around May or June 2015 I'll have a lot of information, the pitfalls and the advantages of CMAR contract, could write quite bit.

Ron – Possibly Max would want to write an article on hiring Veterans in the workforce. Did a really nice job on a presentation at the last fall conference. Would be helpful

Max – Holding off once I get everything in line with the VA. Still in progress. Once a final approval. Possibility will do an article in the future.

Mike – Is there any information or questions that people have out there that we might do an article on to answer on things your unfamiliar with? Jennifer Carr talked about the new Coliform Rule. Anything like that would be beneficial to everybody in the water/wastewater community, maybe provide some information that may not be out there or readily available to people.

Will – Going along with your survey of your previous test takers. Select “what a common theme is”. I'm sure there so many with that information anyway Might come up with the common threads, chlorinators or water treatment side, could address those directly. We encourage your feedback.

Max – Article on the testing schedule for the year of 2015

8) Member's Open Comments

No member comments

9) Public Comments

Daralyn - We have quite a bit of money out there and getting a lot of pressure from EPA to get that money out. So currently even after all the obligations we have with the Clean Water we have about 50 million dollars. Drinking Water we have about 20 million remaining. Anyone interested in funding please get ahold of myself. There is not much money in terms of the principle forgiveness or the additional subsidies but there is money out there for loans. The interest is still low.

Mike – That goes for anybody even if you didn't submit the priority list this year?

Daralyn – The priority solicitation letter will go out this December. Please get ahold of Daralyn ahead of time, because what is happening EPA is putting a lot of pressure to get all of the money out as quickly as possible. It will be first come first serve. People will have to come forward earlier than they have in the past. We will have a board meeting in January 2015 at least for drinking water. If there was someone not on the priority list but wanted to be we could possibly add them, maybe for the March 2015 meeting but not January, 2015.

Mike – How many rural organizations are aware of this SRF? This could potentially be an article to put in the Water Line, i.e. this is what SRF is about and how you can apply for it.

Daralyn – Yes, can do an article on the SRF process. The Clean Water Act has changed some. Some privates are not eligible some were not in the past. There are some additional requirements, that's a general statement we have to look at them on a separate basis. Keep in mind, in the OFA Group here at NDEP are not familiar with the private facilities in terms of clean water. If anybody out there is interested actual private systems.

Bob F – NvRWA could do that article for our upcoming magazine and re-publish it in July 2015. There is one currently going out in a couple of weeks.

10) Agenda Items for the Next NWWOF Meeting

Mike – Between now and the next Forum meeting if you have anything that you would like on the Agenda to discuss please give Max a call or e-mail. You can also contact one of the board members and we will be sure that it will be put on the agenda.

11) Next Forum Meeting(s) – Action Item

Wednesday, March 18, 2015 2:15 pm– 3:15 pm.

12) Adjourn

Harvey - moved to adjourn

Mike - seconded the motion

11:08 am

Reminder to Certified Operators: You are eligible to receive renewal contact hours for attendance at Operator Forum meetings!