



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, June 19, 2012

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

Videoconference to: NDEP Las Vegas Office, and Great Basin College
Red Rock Conference Room 1500 College Parkway
2030 E. Flamingo Rd., Suite 230 Lundberg Hall, Room 114
Las Vegas, NV Elko, NV

Minutes

1. Call To Order and Introductions (Bob Foerster)- The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m.

Forum Members Present: Chairman Bob Foerster (NVRWA), Vice Chairman John Hulett (WCDWR), Cameron McKay (KGID); Harvey Johnson (IVGID), Bob Foerster (NvRWA), Lynn Forsberg (Elko video-conference); Mike Ariztia (SVGID)

Elko Attendance (via video): Lynn Forsberg (Elko County), Dale Johnson (Elko County)

Introductions: Ron Penrose (TMWA and Op Cert Test Administrator); PUC: Cindy Turiczek; Adam Roney; Eddy Quaglieri; Paul Maguire.

Representing the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP): Jennifer Carr, Chief, Bureau of Safe Drinking Water (BSDW); Kelly McGowan, BSDW (Op Cert Professional Staff); Nan Paulson (Op Cert Administrative Assistant)

Telephonic Attendance: Jennifer McMartin, Wastewater Certification

2. Approval of Minutes from March 21, 2012 – Action Item

Bob Foerster recommended a correction by changing the word gregarious to egregious in item #7. Cameron McKay moved for approval of the minutes with the change. Harvey Johnson seconded the motion. All were in favor, no one was opposed.

3. Drinking Water Exam Results Review from June 2012 Tests (Kelly McGowan)

Kelly McGowan talked about the March Op Cert test results. He has been making some changes to make the information less confusing. Kelly said the Pass rate for Distribution in the North was above 70%, and Treatment in the South was at 100% for the seven test takers.

Bob Foerster said he likes the spreadsheet that lists the test topics (a copy will be attached at the end of the Minutes). He asked if BSDW asks for specific questions to be on the test. Kelly said that ABC determines the questions. He added that he has requested information specifically that is not regular information from ABC. I have no idea what these last three sentences are referring to. Kelly stated that he would like to review twelve tests to see if specific categories show up. He is thinking it would be good to have specific training/study suggestions for testing.

Darrin Price asked if WWET was still active in southern NV. Kelly replied that it is. Darrin asked if it has a positive effect on testing. Kelly advised that the variety of classes offered does help, but the content might be only for Distribution or only for Treatment.

Bob mentioned that testers do get a breakdown of their test that lets them know their strong points and weaknesses.

4. **Review of previous years' statistics for retesting in same grade level – Action Item** (combined with #5)
5. **Review Treatment Test Results for the last 3 tests administered in Southern Nevada. (Kelly McGowan)** (combined with #4)

Kelly McGowan discussed the very high pass rate in Treatment testing in southern Nevada. Mike Ariztia said the northern Nevada Distribution passing rate in September 2011 was higher than in southern Nevada; but it was the opposite for Treatment. Mike wondered why this was happening. Kelly said he also wants to understand the reasoning behind it. Mike added that southern has better opportunities to be exposed to more treatment processes and issues surrounding water treatment. Jennifer McMartin mentioned that ABC can produce a spreadsheet for this. Kelly said he will ask for it.

Jennifer McMartin shared that ABC will be issuing new Treatment exams in 1- 1 ½ months, and this will be for Drinking Water, Wastewater, and Collections. The tests will be more involved and should be in the September exam cycle.

Jennifer Carr asked if anyone knew of anyone that volunteered to be a Beta Tester for ABC. No information was available. Jennifer Carr also asked if WWET was still functioning and if that might be why the southern scores are better? Kelly McGowan said he did not think WWET training was the reason. He will ask Brett Goodnow and the LVVWD if they have had training specific to testing for Treatment.

Jennifer Carr said the monthly 3 hour classes are more like Crystel Montecinos' classes. The College of Southern Nevada does have an Associate's program. Kelly said he would like to find out if they have a positive effect on testing.

6. **Training Funding – State/Federal Resources – (Adele Basham & Open Discussion)**

Adele Basham was not available. Bob Foerster said he will use data to guide training needs, as the current discussion seems to lead toward this. Mike Ariztia said that opportunities may come up for operators to train at larger facilities. He would like to see operators train together, maybe even do a work/training swap, possibly for a week or two so operators can gain some hands-on experience.

Cam McKay said he has done that before and allowed ride-alongs to go with on-call operators. They were able to learn but not actually do the work. Mike said he thinks the Forum should get this idea out to the people so they know it is an option. Cam and Mike agreed there should be further discussion on practical application of book knowledge.

Cam also mentioned that it would help if the high school would give credit to summer interns. Working through a high school is good; the hard part is getting the students to pass a drug test. Jennifer Carr said she can put this information onto the Forum Webpage.

Ron Penrose asked if there can be a summary of training programs, funding sources, etc. for all of Nevada for drinking water and Wastewater. Kelly McGowan said the BSDW Op Cert website has a calendar of approved training & links to external sources that can refer people to get training. John Hulett asked if NDEP looks at community college curriculum and posts valuable classes. Kelly acknowledged that has not been done, however he does accept requests to review trainings for approval. Ron mentioned that an inventory of training programs and how they are funded could be helpful. He added that a short two page write-up could be useful.

Mike Ariztia asked if anyone had contacted WNC to see if they offer a degree program. Darrin Price said yes, and that a lack of registrants has caused it to be stopped at TMCC and UNR. On-Line classes even needed more people to register for them. Travel seems to be an issue. Mike suggested looking into this again to see if on-line courses might have more interest. He further suggested this be added to a newsletter to get the word out. He also wanted to know if there would be a degree. Darrin said the AWWA should be asked to see how many people are pushing for training.

Jennifer Carr said NDEP can get the stats on the number of operators we have in each discipline and grade. She said it would be interesting to find out how many II's want to be a III, and if grade I's want to stay there or become a II. Jennifer McMartin mentioned that the new NvWEA president, Candice Elder, is energized to investigate opportunities. She added that NvWEA also has an on-line training calendar and that the NvWEA wants to see what attendance will be like for preapproved classes. Bob Foerster said he will get in touch with Candice, and he thinks attendance will be higher with Wastewater included.

7. NDEP Updates (Kelly McGowan)

Kelly reminded everyone that the next Operator Certification exam is next week. Ron Penrose said there are no exams in Winnemucca or Hawthorne. The total number of exams is 87.

8. Waterlines Publication (All Attendees)

There were no comments about the last Waterlines issue, and there are no articles in the queue. Kelly asked for article ideas. Bob Foerster would like an inventory of training programs and wanted ideas on how classes can be brought to the operators. He thought it would be good to post a reminder in Waterlines on how to get a training class approved by Kelly.

a. Article Assignments for Next Edition

Cameron McKay said a Wastewater article, and a treatment training article would be good to post. Jennifer Carr said a press release was coming out about Clark County getting a \$30 million SRF loan possibly about membranes and ozone.

Darrin Price talked about a workshop he had attended at UNR last week. The workshop was put on by Andrea Seifert of NDEP. The workshop provided a sample Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for working with the new Chlorine Testing requirements. A link to this SOP will be posted in Waterlines. In the fall, Cam may write an article about the Intern Program and scholarships that may be available now at trade schools instead of just colleges.

Kelly McGowan said ABC is going to be certifying continuing education programs. It will be helpful to know when ABC has an approved program because then he may no longer need to determine eligibility for continuing education units.

9. Member's Open Comments- (combined with item 10)

10. Public Comments- (combined with item 9)

Kelly mentioned that most systems will be getting a reduction in paper from BSDW. They may get a postcard if we don't have an email address on file, but the Operator Certification program is primarily using emails to contact water operators. The Operator Certification program has email addresses for about 90% of the operators. Some operators may be reluctant to offer their email addresses, but we hope to help them transition to this method of contact more easily.

At the moment, Kelly is still working through a list of operators that failed to renew. It was beneficial for many reasons, one being that he found an expired operator that was in responsible charge of a system who had not renewed. Some operators have lost their jobs due to not renewing in time and others have been reported to regional EPA as operating a system without being certified.

Bob Foerster mentioned a water operator title change being promoted by the National Rural Water Association. The new title being promoted is System Operations Specialist. The change is to promote a more professional and respectable title.

Jennifer Carr said the EPA is trying to get Veterans hired. The Veteran's Administration is trying to get the word out for Veterans to look into this. The Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR) in Las Vegas is interested in learning about water jobs. Jennifer Carr has a letter from the Administration. They want to know how many jobs are really available. Bob Foerster said the first thing that comes to mind is how to replace retiring people. There should be a way to get some numbers for them. John Hulett said the Water Research Foundation may have some numbers.

Jennifer McMartin added that in some southern cities, employees were being moved around. In order to save jobs, some Parks and Recreation employees were given positions in Wastewater Treatment facilities.

Kelly said he could furnish the group with the number of operators that have not renewed.

Bob suggested an article be written that explains how to get into the water field. Jennifer Carr said that making connections with kids would be good. Eddy Quaglieri (PUC) said they are trying to learn how to get experience. He will talk with Kelly. They want to get knowledge on what operators are supposed to do. Cam said the NvRWA can help with that.

11. Agenda Items for Next NWWOF Meeting.

Darrin Price asked if there are scholarships available to assist with training costs, and might they be available for older folks? Jennifer Carr said Adele Basham may have answers to this. We will need to find out if it can be used for on-line training.

Bob Foerster said a portion of the SRF is set aside for scholarships. There are no age restrictions. It is typically used to assist operators in attending conferences. No one has asked to use it for individual training classes. Darrin added that it might be more beneficial if used for continuous training instead of an event (like a conference). Bob stated that the money is such a limited amount that they want to help as many people as possible. There are some limitations, such as the person must be working for a water system that has operating issues or concerns. Jennifer Carr will ask Adele Basham. Jennifer Carr added that the State reimburses some employees for taking certain classes if they pass the class with a C grade or better. Bob suggested that other ideas to help operators get training should be sent to Jennifer C., Kelly, or Nan.

12. Upcoming conferences/trainings –

Jennifer McMartin mentioned there will be Wastewater training in the next couple of months. When the dates are available, it will be posted on the calendar.

NV-CA AWWA AFC12, October 8-11, 2012 Town & Country Hotel and Resort 500 Hotel Circle North San Diego, CA 92108

2013 ABC Annual Conference: Waves of Change - Oceans of Opportunities, 26th Annual Conference, "Waves of Change - Oceans of Opportunities" on January 22-25, 2013, in San Diego, California.

NvRWA Two-Day Water and Wastewater Training Conference, Laughlin, NV September 12 – 13, 2012

NvRWA Annual Training and Technical Conference, Reno, NV March 11-14, 2013

Tri-State will be in Primm, NV in early September.

RCAC will be Sept. 4th and 5th and the training is free, per Steve Palmer.

12. Next Forum Meeting – *Action Item*

September 6th, 2012 10:00 .am. Motion to accept by Cam, Harvey seconded the motion.

13. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Harvey Johnson and seconded by Mike Ariztia. Adjourned 11:20 a.m.

Reminder to Certified Operators: You are eligible to receive renewal contact hours for attendance at Operator Forum Meetings! See the following attachments for Treatment Test breakdown, as per item #3.

Topic	June 1, 2011				September 1, 2011				March 1, 2012									
	Number of Candidates	Number of Questions for Subject Matter	Total Number of Questions Answered	Total Number of Questions Incorrectly Answered	% Pass	% Fail	Number of Candidates	Number of Questions for Subject Matter	Total Number of Questions Answered	Total Number of Questions Incorrectly Answered	% Pass	% Fail	Number of Candidates	Number of Questions for Subject Matter	Total Number of Questions Answered	Total Number of Questions Incorrectly Answered	% Pass	% Fail
Perform Administrative Duties	4	3	32	0	300%	0%	7	3	23	0	100%	0%	5	3	13	0	300%	0%
Collect Samples & Interpret Analysis	4	11	44	0	300%	0%	7	11	77	5	94%	6%	5	11	55	6	89%	13%
Drinking Water Regulations	4	20	80	20	75%	25%	7	20	140	38	73%	27%	5	20	200	34	69%	31%
Evaluate Equipment	4	2	8	1	88%	12%	7	2	14	0	100%	0%	5	2	10	2	80%	20%
Evaluate Operators on Off Equipment	4	2	8	2	75%	25%	7	2	14	0	100%	0%	5	2	10	1	90%	10%
Characteristics of Source Water	4	5	20	1	95%	5%	7	5	35	12	65%	34%	5	5	25	3	88%	12%
Process Control of Laboratory Analysis	4	5	20	9	55%	45%	7	5	35	13	63%	37%	5	5	25	13	48%	52%
Maintain Equipment	4	13	52	5	90%	10%	7	13	91	16	82%	18%	5	13	65	6	91%	9%
Chemical Treatment/Adjustment	4	6	24	4	83%	17%	7	6	42	13	69%	31%	5	6	30	11	63%	37%
Chemical Treatment/Adjustment	4	13	52	11	79%	21%	7	13	91	15	84%	16%	5	13	65	9	88%	12%
Residuals Disposal	4	4	16	2	75%	25%	7	4	28	4	86%	14%	5	4	20	3	80%	20%
General Math	4	4	16	5	69%	31%	7	4	28	4	86%	14%	5	4	20	7	60%	40%
Operate Equipment	4	7	28	3	89%	11%	7	7	49	8	84%	16%	5	7	35	10	71%	29%
Perform Security & Safety Procedures	4	4	16	2	75%	25%	7	4	28	2	50%	50%	5	4	20	2	50%	50%
Perform Security Procedures	4	1	4	3	25%	75%	7	1	7	3	57%	43%	5	1	5	3	40%	60%

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Perform Administrative Duties	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	2	4	1	75%	25%
Perform Administrative Duties-Math	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	1	2	1	50%	50%
Collect Samples & Interpret Analysis	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	5	10	1	90%	10%
Drinking Water Regulations	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	15	30	8	73%	27%
Evaluate Operation of Equipment	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	3	6	1	83%	17%
Characteristics of Source Water	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	1	2	0	100%	0%
Characteristics of Source Water	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	4	8	3	63%	37%
Process Control of Laboratory Analysis	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	13	26	6	77%	23%
Laboratory Analysis-Math	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	1	2	0	100%	0%
Maintain Equipment	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	8	16	1	94%	6%
Chemical Treatment/Adjustment	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	4	8	4	50%	50%
Chemical Treatment/Adjustment	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	7	14	3	79%	21%
Clarification Sedimentation	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	3	6	4	78%	22%
Clarification Sedimentation-Math	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	3	6	6	0%	100%
Coagulation and Flocculation	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	3	6	2	67%	33%
Coagulation and Flocculation-Math	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	4	8	2	75%	25%
Filtration	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	2	4	0	100%	0%
Filtration-Math	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	2	4	0	100%	0%
Other Treatment Processes	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	7	14	6	57%	43%
Residuals Disposal-Math	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	1	2	1	50%	50%
Residuals Disposal	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	4	8	4	50%	50%
Operate Equipment-Math	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	1	2	0	100%	0%
Operate Equipment	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	4	8	1	88%	12%
Perform Security & Safety Procedures	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	3	6	0	100%	0%
Perform Security Procedures	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0			2	1	2	1	50%	50%

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	Number of Candidates	Number of Questions for Subject Matter	Total Number of Questions Answered	Total Number of Questions Incorrectly Answered	% Pass	% Fail	Number of Candidates	Number of Questions for Subject Matter	Total Number of Questions Answered	Total Number of Questions Incorrectly Answered	% Pass	% Fail
Perform Administrative Duties	1	1	1	0	100%	0%	2	1	2	0	100%	0%
Perform Administrative Duties-Math	1	1	1	0	100%	0%	2	1	2	0	100%	0%
Collect Samples & Interpret Analysis	1	10	10	1	90%	10%	2	30	20	7	65%	35%
Drinking Water Regulations	1	15	15	4	73%	27%	2	35	30	12	60%	40%
Evaluate Operation Of Equipment	1	4	4	3	75%	25%	2	4	3	1	88%	12%
Characteristics Of Source Water	1	5	5	0	100%	0%	2	5	3	1	90%	10%
Process Control Laboratory Analysis	1	6	6	0	100%	0%	2	6	12	3	75%	25%
Maintain Equipment	1	6	6	2	67%	33%	2	6	12	3	81%	19%
Chemical Treatment/Addition-Math	1	3	3	1	67%	33%	2	3	6	4	60%	40%
Chemical Treatment/Addition	1	9	9	3	89%	11%	2	9	38	4	78%	22%
Clarification/Sedimentation	1	2	2	0	100%	0%	2	2	4	2	90%	10%
Clarification Sedimentation-Math	1	2	2	0	100%	0%	2	2	4	2	90%	10%
Coagulation and Flocculation	1	3	3	0	100%	0%	2	3	6	3	50%	50%
Filtration	1	7	7	4	43%	57%	2	7	34	3	79%	21%
Filtration-Math	1	2	2	0	100%	0%	2	2	4	3	75%	25%
Other Treatment Process	1	8	8	3	88%	12%	2	8	36	6	61%	39%
Residuals Disposal-Math	1	3	3	0	100%	0%	2	3	2	0	100%	0%
Residuals Disposal	1	3	3	0	100%	0%	2	3	6	0	100%	0%
General Math	1	2	2	0	100%	0%	2	2	4	0	100%	0%
Operate Equipment	1	5	5	3	80%	20%	2	5	30	2	80%	20%
Perform Safety & Safety Procedures	1	2	2	2	50%	50%	2	2	4	2	50%	50%
Perform Safety Procedures	1	2	2	0	100%	0%	2	2	4	1	75%	25%