



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
December 7, 2022

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 223 227 482 746

Passcode: bxNmL9

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 775-321-6111,,243642299#](#) United States, Reno

Phone Conference ID: 243 642 299#

If you would like to attend the meeting in person, please see the below locations for Elko and Carson City.

Carson City Location-Humboldt Conference Room, Bryan Building, 901 S Stewart St., Carson City, NV 89701

Elko Location- 1550 STP. Road, Elko, NV 89801 (Sewer Treatment Plant).

Agenda

1) Call to Order and Introductions. (Kevin Baughman, Forum Board Member)

Kevin Baughman called the meeting to order at 10:03am

Forum Members Present-Kevin Baughman, Greg Reed, Dale Johnson, Jim Kerr, Tom Georgi, Crystal Montecinos, Andrew Hickman

Elko Location- Mike Richards, Roger Veldt, Kevin Woten, Brett Walsh, Steve Schroeder, Tim Anders, Mark Bailey, Justin Bradeen, Michael L. Haddenham, Andrew Storla, Payden Dingman, Scott Dancz

Carson Location- Greg Reed and Kevin Baughman

On TEAMS-Cameron Mckay, Shelley Peterson, Carlos Quiroz-Aguilera, Brian Watts, Stephanie Kapfenstein, Maricel Rabino, Christopher Hoffert, Tom Healy, Paul Bishop, Tom Grundy, Don Kalkoske, Joe Mathein, Will Raymond, Kevin Meyers, Linh Kieu

2) Approval of Forum Minutes from September 14, 2022. – Action Item

Jim Kerr- Correction on last minutes from CEC to CDL.

Thomas Georgi-Motion to Approve

Dale Johnson-Second

Unanimous



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

- 3) **NWEA Announcements and Wastewater Exam Results, Ashley Jacobson**
- 4) **BSDW Announcements & Drinking Water Exam Results**

Carlos Quiroz-Aguilera- Mentioned to keep in mind that in quarter 3, there is a lot less people taking exams during this time period. These values will be lowered. In Distribution it looks like we had 8 people take the test for grade 1, 4 for grade 2, 3 for grade 3 and 3 for grade 4. When you are looking at the passing percentages for grade 3 and 4, the percentages are very low since there isn't a lot of people testing. The most missed for grade 1 was system components and disinfection. For grade 2 it was disinfection that was missed. For grade 3 it was disinfection, MEA and lab equipment. For grade 4 missed the most in disinfection and lab. For treatment, we didn't have any applicants for grade 3 or 4. We had 4 for grade 1 and for grade 2, we had 4 as well. Everyone passed the test in grade 1 and 50% passed for grade 2. The most missed was laboratory. Presented charts so people could see how people are progressing or not.

Crystel Montecinos- Asked these are just for the written exams correct?

Carlos Quiroz-Aguilera- Answered when they are looking at the 3rd quarter results, that is correct. They are waiting on the rest of the data to be sent to them. They only have data for this particular quarter. Once he receives all of the data, he will put it all together.

Kevin Baughman- Asked when you don't have any test takers, what happens if you leave that off? Will it not generate a chart?

Carlos Quiroz-Aguilera- It does not show if there no test takers on the graph.

Justin Bradeen- What is the end game for these charts that Carlos created? Also mentioned maybe we could see what operators were using for study materials and corollate if they passed or failed; it would give other operators the ability to benefit which study materials to use.

Carlos Quiroz-Aguilera- The graphs are a good indicator on how the operators are doing with the exams. Kind of gives us an idea on what the operators need to focus on.

Guest- Asked on the categories, when you let the person taking the exam, is there any more information they could get on those categories?

Carlos Quiroz-Aguilera- They understand the categories that are listed are very broad. One of the things that they did was they reached out to ABC representatives to show up to the forum to answer all your questions.

Andrew Hickman- Wanted to point out, in distribution, most of the people struggled in the area that says disinfection on the graph. Both distribution and treatment exams seem like they have the same questions. Maybe separating the test criteria might help or maybe cross training.



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

Jim Kerr- Mentioned that this is one of the reasons why we asked ABC to come to the forum to answer some of these questions.

Linh Kieu- Mentioned that in our regs, we do have disinfection under the distribution so if you are just chlorinating for disinfection or residual, that is under the water systems distribution classification. One more comment that he had is that DocuSign on our website seems to be having issues lately. If you do experience any issues, you can send the applications directly to Rachel or the Op-cert email address. You can also mail or fax your applications.

Guest- Wanted to point out that if an operator misses 30 questions on the exam, that is 30% that he is probably doing wrong out in the field. If there was a way to see what questions you got wrong and review, that would help the operators significantly.

Tom Grundy wanted to motion that we try and get the questions that are missed and review the questions.

Andrew Hickman second the motion.

Greg Reed- Did not agree with that motion.

5) **Q&A with ABC Representative, Paul Bishop**

Paul Bishop- Mentioned that Tom Healy is also here and is their vice president and oversees the daily operations of testing service and exam development. Wanted to let everyone know that the motion that was just made, they will not allow. It violates exam development, every certification in the certification industry. There is a reason they have exams security questions. You may take issue with some of the exam reports, but the amount of time that is given for an exam and the amount of information that they provide in their reports, they do this because they do feel that it is important to give some context. With that said though, there need to know will make you dive down a little deeper. The importance of these exams and they do ensure public health and safety. These exams test minimal competency, therefore, what they do and how they do it is creditable to industry standard.

Tom Healy- These exams are used across the United States and Canada. If the test answers and the content are reviewed not in a secured environment, it introduces an issue with people that have not had access to the content. These exams that they build are done so through subject matter experts in the industry. They want to insure that not only the content is relevant, but that nobody has an unfair advantage. These tests are designed to test minimal competency. It is just not possible for them to do what the forum is asking. They have discussed with PSI to possibly making the math questions an item on the report. Do not know if it is possible, but currently what they prove in the master report that is provided to the candidates after they take their exams does go above and beyond. That also links directly to the need-to-know criteria that is located on ABC's website. The need-to-know criteria is a breakdown of everything testable on the exams. It is broken down into those categories that Carlos shared earlier.



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

Tom Grundy- Asked if it is possible to share that information on the most missed subjects with the trainers so they can focus on those areas?

Tom Healy- Yes, that is absolutely something that can be compiled and sent to the NDEP and they can send it to the trainers. That is fantastic information for trainers to have.

Guest- Asked what about the next level of what they missed in the question? For example, the operator needed more math on the pump section of the test.

Tom Healy- The committees do take in account in creditable industry feedback from all of their clients. There has been feedback from that they want the math questions to be called out, specifically in those content areas. He will take that feedback to the committees and let them know what he is hearing from the state of Nevada. Those changes, they can't make currently, but can take the committees to apply to future examination development. Which they are doing right now.

Brian Watts- Was curious and wanted to see if the exam reports have changed a lot in the years? Back in 2017 it seemed like there was a lot more feedback in the summary reports.

Tom Healy- Answered in previous variations of the exams did have a little more of a breakdown of the content. They had to have a benchmark somewhere and they have to send these reports out nationally. He will take the feedback to the committees though.

Guest- Asked how does Nevada compare to the other states that you run these exams for?

Tom Healy- They don't ever report those jurisdictions for various reasons because no 2 programs are exactly the same. You have different eligibility criteria, you have different requirements for continuing education, different requirements for the direct responsible in charge, etc. You have all those pieces, and it doesn't coincide nicely with another one.

Kevin Baughman- It's against best practices and when you just say disinfection when you give us feedback and you are saying you cannot breakdown anymore so people can do better on future exams? And then they have board members that have had questions if they questions are up to date and pertinent on what they are doing out in the field?

Tom Healy- What they can provide is the task lists that are outlined in the need-to-know criteria. They are currently down in Atlanta holding a job analysis workshop. That job analysis is essentially is a survey instrument that is going to be sent out to the entire industry. So every operator in this room, if you have taken an exam through PSI, will have the chance to respond to the survey. That survey gives them information about the duties of the operators. The latest survey they did was in 2014 and this year they have done a water treatment and distribution job analysis survey which was in September.



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

Jim Kerr- Commented that they never got that survey until like a week ago. They received it after the fact when it was supposed to be sent in by. They received it from John Solvie.

Paul Bishop- Answered that survey was sent out in the fall. They can definitely resend that survey out though. The other thing that they were trying to do when COVID hit, they are trying to ramp up after COVID. That survey is supposed to go out to all operators. They can open up the survey back up.

Tom Healy- No problem with opening up that survey again. It is a great way to get feedback from operators in Nevada.

Greg Reed- Suggested that maybe we can get that survey to NDEP-Linh or Rachel, and they can get that distributed to all operators.

Jim Kerr- Asked is that the only way Nevada can audit your system for developing this test? Is there a way we can audit in a way that we can for Nevada operators? You mentioned earlier that the state of Nevada has a contract with you and part of that contract is there is no way to review the test, if the state wanted to change that contract, is that a way to do that?

Paul Bishop- The standardized exams are built by operators for operators. These exams are done by subject matter experts. There maybe certain things that you do or do not do, however, they have taken this approach in the last 2 decades to train operators in Nevada, can be an operator anywhere else in the country or in North America. They train operators regardless of the state or the state lines. This does not create an unfairness issue. In regards to the contract, agreeing to the current exams, the staff at the time did review and did look at the exams. Before, we did allow the states to review the exams. We can't allow individual review of the exams. Each one of those exam questions takes approximately 1,000 or more volunteer hours to develop, over \$2,500 value on each one of those items. When you subject one question on an exam form or if you compromise them, the entire form is compromised. They can't just switch out questions. There has to be a psychometric process.

Andrew Hickman- Asked about standardized exams in NV vs Ca?

Tom Healy- Agrees with Andrew that there is so many different jurisdictions and every jurisdiction is different. There goal of the association is to give you standardization to the industry.

Guest- Asked why do they have to always put in all of their information on an exam application even when it is the same information?

Linh Kieu- Answered we are pretty much in the stone age with applications, but the good news is that we are transitioning into a new database which is one of the reasons why we are a little



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

behind on the renewals. The new database does track all of your information. We are hoping within the next year we are going to open it up to all operators.

Justin Bradeen- Asked is PSI only dealing with the test and not the curriculum? Is there a specific curriculum that is more complete than the rest that they could recommend to their operators?

Tom Healy- A new addition that they are looking at an association level, is building essentially an educational hub. They want to be able to create successful exam attempts on the first try. They have access to so many good trainers. It is something that is coming and want to help operators with fantastic trainers. They get asked that question all the time and they want to provide that help.

Paul Bishop- Added that they wish they could say that there's the one that Tom recommended was beneficial and all his stuff is online. The ones that do the best are the ones that use the need to know and the AWWA courses. They are trying to create a more focused opportunity for operators to learn and to access in person and online.

6) **Technical Assistance - Upcoming Trainings – Bridget Harris (RCAC) and Kevin Baughman (NvRWA)**

Kevin Baughman- A couple of updates, Max Sosa has recently been in an accident and will be out for a little while. They are trying to get another person temporarily in his position. They had an EPA program and was supposed to be renewed in August, but they renewed in September and changed the criteria on the program. They used to have to do a lot of online trainings and the EPA wanted to focus more on onsite activities. Joe has been working on that set up trainings at different sites and broadcast them as well. Sent Carlos some classes to Carlos last minute to be approved for contact hours in December. Hopefully they can get the courses out to the operators soon. Please watch the website though with updates on classes. They are still planning to have a conference in March as well.

Linh Kieu- Mentioned that to please look at RCAC website for contact hours.

7) **Forum Members: Training Needs and Open Comments/Update LCRR tentatively scheduled for next meeting**

Kevin Baughman- Mentioned that ABC seems like they are scaling back on regulations. Suggested to the board members if maybe a course or curriculum on regulations can be approved and maybe have an exam as part of that?

Greg Reed- Mentioned that Linh has looked into this and had something like this in the future. Of course, it would require a change in the regs, but what is the status of what was in process with NDEP?



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

Linh Kieu- NDEP has thought about it and has had several discussions about it, but have not done anything yet because Greg is right, they would have to rewrite the regs to include this to be approved.

Jim Kerr- Suggested to maybe put together a regulation class in the forum or at the conference.

Kevin Baughman-Agrees that there needs to be a class regarding regulations. He will look into a class at the conference.

8) **Public Comments**

Steve Schroeder- Explained that he was about to get ready to take his D4 exam, had Rachel look over application and she said it was fine to submit. The application was rejected since it did not have adequate hours according to Carlos. The issue is that he can't get his other money back that he took for his educational course and can't get a full exam.

Jim Kerr- Remembers that when they were making those changes and he thought there was a discussion where if the operators took any courses that had to do with drinking water that they were happy with that. They were not so worried with how many exact hours they received in one course.

Linh Kieu- Answered that the regs don't say anything about 144 courses, it says 144 post-secondary hours. One credit has to be over that 3.6 CEU's. Maybe that course can be approved over that 3.6 CEU reg, but we would have to rewrite that regulation as well. We will look into American Water Works courses.

Dale Johnson- Asked why would an operator lose their money and not be able to just use that money in another testing cycle?

Linh Kieu- It is a matter of logistics. We do have some flexibility, for example, you can postpone your exam until the next testing date for written exams and computerized exams. A lot of times when we get the call to postpone, we already have ordered your exam so that would be a reason why we couldn't credit your application. There is also staff time to review the appointment as well.

Greg Reed- Mentioned that if we do not recognize AWWA and American Water College for contact hours, we need to review our regs to recognize those courses.

Linh Kieu- This is good feedback, and we will make it one of our action items and put on the next agenda.

9) **Call for Agenda Items & Forum Goals & for the next meeting**



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

Greg Reed- Asked for the updated list of the members at the next meeting.

Jim Kerr- Asked for the updated list to be emailed to the board members as well.

10) **Scheduling next Forum Meeting – (4th Qtr. meeting) – Action Item**

Requested for the next meeting to be on Wednesday, March 15

Greg Reed-Motion to approve

Jim Kerr-Second

Unanimous

11) **Adjourn**

Greg Reed-Motion to approve

Jim Kerr-Second

Unanimous

Adjourned at 12:00pm