



# Nevada Water and Wastewater Operator's Forum

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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 October 4th, 2016 – 9:00am-11:00am

Location: Richard H. Bryan Building,  
*Tahoe Hearing Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 High Tech Center Bldg  
Las Vegas, NV Rm 137  
Elko, NV 89801

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

### Agenda

#### 1) Call to Order and Introductions. (Bob Foerster)

Meeting was called to order at 9:02AM

**Forum Members Present:** Max Sosa, BSDW/OpCert; Will Raymond, TMWA/ Test Administrator; Bob Foerster, NvRWA; Greg Reed, Round Hill GID

**Introductions and Guests:** Joe Ovila Juneau, Springwood; Randy Mark, Broadbent & Associates; Jack Byrom, TMWA; Crystel Montecinos, BSDW; Brian Gibbs, Lyon County; Scott Fleckenstein, Lyon County; Mike Gutierrez, Lyon County, Chris Hoffert, Lyon County; Jon Jones, Lyon County; Don Lafara, NDEP; Ed Quaglieri, NOWR; Rit Palmer, CC PW; Steve Rippe, Douglas County; Daralyn Dobson, NDEP/SRF; Kevin Baughman, RCAC, Jackie Boado, TMWA; Brett Coffman, TMWA; Mike Antoine, BSDW; Jennie Fong, BSDW; My-Linh Nguyen, BSDW; Harvey Johnson, Retired

**Elko:** Jim Kerr, Elko County Public Works; Dale Johnson, City of Elko Water; Dean Cernick, City of Elko Water

**Las Vegas on the Phone:** Tom Georgi, LVVWD; Greg Eoff, Riverside Resort; Rick Giltner, SNWA, Byron Brice, Marigold Mining Company

2) **Approval of Forum/NTC Minutes from June 15, 2016. – Action Item**

**Greg Reed**- Move to Approve

**Max Sosa**-Second

Unanimous

3) **Drinking Water Exam Results Review from June 23, 2016. ( Max Sosa)**

**Max Sosa**- Now for a brief summary of the June 2016 certification exams. There were 122 applicants scheduled, 112 applicants took the exam and 60 passed. The overall passing rate was 61%.

Only 39 out of the 83 applicants testing for the Distribution exams passed. In this test cycle water distribution Grades 1 and 2 made up the majority of the testers. That is a 47% passing rate for distribution. The highest percentages for nonmastering for the Grade 1 was installing equipment and laboratory analysis. The highest percentages for nonmastering for the Grade 2 were monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting disinfection. These are items that need more training.

There were only a total of 29 applicants testing for treatment and 21 of them passed. That is a 72% passing rate for treatment.

There are 135 applicants scheduled for the October 6, 2016, exam. Hopefully everyone will be better prepared for the upcoming October 6, 2016 test. Best of luck to everyone.

4) **Training Needs / Forum Input**

**Bob Foerster**- RCAC is putting together a community outreach and well assessment workshop on October 5<sup>th</sup> in Carson City. Focused mostly on private wells, but it is also credited for distribution operators. It is a 4 hour session.

In November, the EPA is putting on two sessions, one in Reno and one in Las Vegas. This is all day, 6 1/2 hours free Drought Response and Water Loss Workshop for water utilities. This will cover the AWWA water audit software and a number of other topics such as EPA, drought response literature. Good class to go to if you need contact hours. At the Las Vegas session, it will be at the EPA lab which is on the UNLV campus. At the Reno session it will be on November 16<sup>th</sup> and the Las Vegas

session will be on November 17<sup>th</sup>. We will be putting out the flyers probably this week.

**Rick Giltner-** Mentioned in Vegas they just had a 40 hour WULF class for upcoming exams in October. Hopefully the numbers of applicants that pass will be better this time.

**Rit Palmer-** Stated that looking at the deficiencies on the testing, sampling would be a good area to hit.

**Bob Foerster-** Agreed with Rit. Mentions that it is a good guideline if a number of people are deficient in a particular area.

**Max Sosa-** Agrees and mentioned especially in the grades just starting out.

**Crystel Montecinos-** Asked if people tell us if there was a specific part that was particularly difficult or unclear on the test?

**Max Sosa-** Answered that usually operators don't call us and tell us about the test, but it would be nice so we would get some feedback. We do have an exam analysis of the results, but that is the only guideline that we have. The overall issue is typically dealing with SCADA systems and if the operators aren't used to doing the calculations and they see the calculations on the test, they panic. It's different when the operators rely on the systems and then the test asks you do it manually. It is a good idea to practice the calculations manually.

**Randy Mark -** Asked do you have people that challenge a question(s) on the test?

**Will Raymond-** Mentioned that when they do give the tests, all the proctors have instructions on announcing what sheets are in the packet and it is highly encouraged if there are any questions that are ambiguous at all, to make sure you do challenge it. It gives you the opportunity to justify your answer.

**Guest-** Mentioned that in the previous operator forum that there could be the possibility of a class for people taking the test, how to actually go through the process successfully. Asked if this is still possible?

**Bob Foerster-** Mentioned that is typically included in the training because it usually is not more than a half hour material. Some tips would be study 6 months before the test and not 2 weeks prior.

**Guest-** Asked if he could put a class together for the operators and see how it goes.

**Max Sosa-** Agreed for him to put a class together.

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

**Max Sosa**- If your operator certification expires December 31, 2015 the Operator Renewal Season Started September 1, 2016 your certification expires December 31, 2015 please start sending in your renewals applications now do not wait until the expiration date.

READ and UNDERSTAND 445A.646 before selecting the “yes” or “no” box.

NAC 445A.646-Denial of application for certificate or suspension or revocation of certificate: Grounds. (NRS 445A.860, 445A.880) The Division may deny an application for a certificate or suspend or revoke an operator’s full certificate, provisional certificate or certificate as an operator-in-training if he or she:

1. In applying for or obtaining a certificate, has submitted to the Division any application, document, record, report or affidavit, or any information in support thereof, which is false or fraudulent;
2. Is grossly negligent, incompetent or has committed misconduct in the performance of his or her duties as an operator of a public water system;
3. Has demonstrated disregard for the health and safety of the public;
4. Has acted outside the rights and privileges of his or her classification for which he or she holds a certificate;
5. Has been convicted of a violation of any federal law or law of any state relating to water quality, including, but not limited to, the Safe Drinking Water Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 300f et seq.;
6. Has been convicted of a felony or other crime involving moral turpitude, dishonesty or corruption;
7. Has willfully made to an employee of the Division or any health authority any false statement which is material to the administration or enforcement of any provision of this chapter or chapter 445A of NRS;
8. Has failed to renew his or her certification; or
9. Has violated, attempted to violate, assisted or abetted in the violation of, or conspired to violate any provision of this chapter or chapter 445A of NRS.

Please pass on to everyone to make sure they are taking pre-approved training for renewal contact hours. Last renewal season there were some operators that had to reinstate because they could not provide the proper documentation to get the training approved. Please check the op cert website for approved training and call me if you are not sure.

NDEP Operator Certification page:  
[http://ndep.nv.gov/bsdw/cert\\_home.htm](http://ndep.nv.gov/bsdw/cert_home.htm)

Applications

Water Operator Application: Testing, OIT-to-Full Conversion, and Reciprocity

Water Operator Renewal or Reinstatement Application  
Application for Approval of Course of Training for Continuing Education —

External Educational Resources  
For approved contact hours

**a) Guest Speaker Don LaFara; NDEP Laboratory Certification Branch Supervisor**  
**- Setting up a process lab. What is quality assurance and what is a certified lab?**

**Don Lafara**- Quality Assurance (QA) consists of two separate but related activities: Quality Control and Quality Assessment. Both must be operational and coordinated. QA is a system of activities whose purpose is to provide to the producer or user of a product or service the assurance that it meets defined standards of quality with a stated level of confidence.

A QA is plan implemented to monitor the overall system of activities whose purpose is to control the quality of a product or service. Laboratory results are only an estimate of the actual amount of material in the sample. QA uses QC as a tool to know how close the estimate is to the actual amount of material that's present in the sample. If you are only getting 80% recovery of the QC, you are most likely only getting 80% recovery of the material in the sample.

Through the implementation of established and routine quality assurance programs, two primary functions are fulfilled: the determination of quality, via quality assessment, and the control of quality, by the use of QC. By monitoring the accuracy and precision of results, the quality assurance program increases confidence in the reliability of the data.

Quality Control (QC) begins with sample collection and the chain of custody form and ends with the archive of the data and disposal of the sample. Quality data is achieved through the laboratory's control of analytical performance. Through the use of QC (using known standard reference material) laboratories can produce quality data that is accurate and precise (reproducible). It is mandatory that the material or standard used for QC is different than the material or standard used for calibration. If they were the same, you would get the "right" wrong answer.

QC is the systematic measurement or comparison with a standard and the continuous monitoring of processes. These processes contain a feedback loop (peer review) that ensures the prevention of errors. This can be contrasted with quality assurance, which is focused on process output, the quality of what is being produced, in this case the analytical data.

QC processes are built into the routine operations of the laboratory. The QC checks are systematically defined at specified intervals (one every ten or one every 20 samples) and include analyzing a blank, calibration standards, matrix spikes, QC check samples, and duplicates are performed to establish the accuracy and precision (reproducibility) of the data. The checks (if acceptable) certify that the method is in control. They also indicate when the system is out of control.

Control of the system(s) is achieved through the specifications of laboratory services (methods) and the practices followed using Standard Operating Procedures in a Laboratory QA Plan. It also covers the frequency of instrument and facility maintenance, the use of clean glassware, as well as the use of high purity reagents, solvents, and gases. The evaluation of daily performance must be documented to ensure continued production of valid data and to track trends, this is accomplished with control charts.

A Certified Laboratory is a laboratory that commits to a set of predetermined rules and practices that ensure that the data produced is of known and documented quality. Certified laboratories generate data that is scientifically valid by following approved methods that are accurate and precise.

A certified laboratory never deviates from prescribed procedures (approved methods) and produces data that is legally defensible and of known and documented quality.

Quality Assessment: The overall system of activities whose purpose is to provide assurance that the Quality Control system is being implemented effectively. It involves continuous monitoring and evaluation of data produced. This is accomplished using peer review of the data.

6) **NWEA Updates (Jake or Ashley Jacobson)**

**Bob Foerster**- No NWEA updates.

7) **Waterlines Publication (All Attendees)**

a) **Review of Prior Issue**

**Bob Foerster**- No updates

b) **Article Assignments for Next Edition**

**Jackie Boado**- Asked about maybe an article about companies like EWG (Environmental Working Group) attacking utilities.

**Bob Foerster-** Suggested an article focusing on how operator's and water system managers can educate their public. Agrees that this would be a good topic to write about.

**Guest-** Suggested possibly an article about being a new water system. There are a lot of new people coming into this and it would be beneficial for a lot of people. The article could be about what to expect with a new water system.

**Bob Foerster-** Agrees it is a good idea and he understands that it is more than just a checklist of what is going to happen.

**Kevin Baughman-** Agreed to have an article to encourage everybody that is in the water industry be an advocate for the water industry. What kind of things should your neighbors know about.

**Bob Foerster-** Agreed that it does tie in with the past couple of suggestions for articles and agrees that it would be another good article to write about.

**Will Raymond-** Mentioned that he wanted to follow up on what Jackie Boado was talking about and really the EWG has been an advocacy group that has really tends to want to take the spotlight on anything that is controversial out that will scare customers, that will help dry water filter sales, etc. They have addressed it five years ago and have addressed it with NDEP and district health. Likes the idea of chaining up and having one approach, this is why your water is safe.

**Tom Georgi-** Suggested an article about lessons to learn like from Flint.

**Bob Foerster-** Mentioned that he does not know if Flint has really finished. Maybe it could be included in how easy it is to lose public trust and how hard it is to get it back.

**Guest-** Suggested an article about the process beginning to the end of rebuilding of a wastewater plant.

**Bob Foerster-** Mentioned that it is usually beneficial to wait until a project is completed before trying to go back and look at all the things that happened or the directions that were taken that could have been different. Would be interested to look at this at that point.

#### **A. Member's Open Comments**

**Bob Foerster-** No Comments

## **B. Public Comments**

**Bob Foerster**- No Comments

## **C. Agenda Items for the Next NWWOF Meeting**

**Randy Mark**- Suggested that maybe talking about how the sampling schedule can change proven by the concentration that you are seeing.

**Kevin Baughman**- Suggested talking about water quality issues in schools. Maybe some feedback or recommendations the state could give with this.

**My-Linh Nguyen**- Stated that NDEP just received a grant to test for lead content in school drinking water k-12 throughout Nevada. If found, some of the money from the grant will be used to replace anything that needs to be replaced in the schools.

**Guest**- Suggested talking about clarifying who qualifies for what certifications.

**Max Sosa**- Mentioned that it's unfortunate as an operator, the way you learn in this field, you have to go to another facility. You can only test for one grade higher in the facility you are working at. It's a skill set that needs to be learned.

**Will Raymond**- Agrees it is a good discussion to have, but it would be a long process to change the regulations.

**Bob Foerster**-Mentioned that there is also a deadline with bill draft requests for the next legislative session also and we missed the deadline for this session. This will be a topic at the next meeting.

## **D. Next Forum Meeting(s) – Action Item**

**Bob Foerster**- Suggested December 8, 2016

**Guest**- Requested December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**Will Raymond**- Motioned

**Greg Reed**-Second

Unanimous

## **E. Adjourn**

**Tom Georgi**-Motioned



**Jim Kerr**- Second

Unanimous

Adjourned at 10:15am