

**Office of Operator Certification (OOC)
Wastewater Operator Certification Program Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – December 2022**

Meeting Date: Wednesday December 7, 2022

Attendees: Advisory Committee Members

Steve Krai, Kody Tompkins, Ramzi Mahmood, Ben Carver,
Chris Lehman, Josh Vieira, Louis Sun

State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board)

Annette Caraway, Julie Osborn, Neal Funston, Valerie
Gregory, Christine Gordon, Sarah Miller, Alessandra
Langen, Bryan Elder, Doug Wilson

Public

Nora Duffey, Cody Billings, Greg Williams, Michael Chapin,
Nick Rivera, Jason Sanguinetti, Steven Garner, Christina
Decko, Tymone Archie, Jason Sang, Armando Lopez, Sue
Murphy, Gabriel Berzamina

Item 1 – Introductions

- Annette Caraway, Operator Certification Program Manager acted as moderator for this meeting. Meeting was held via Video/Teleconference and in person at the CalEPA building.

Item 2 – Agenda Review

- No agenda items were moved. Agenda approved as is.

Item 3 – Public Comments

- There were no public comments.

Item 4 – Recycled/Advanced Water Treatment

- Steve Garner presented the current cert counts for Advanced Water Treatment. There are 97 for Grade III, 38 for Grade IV, and 19 for Grade V. Since the last update there have been quite a few Grade III's moving up in certification to Grade IV or V. In this program, Operators are able to continue prior level certification until it expires after moving up. Specified hours of continuing education is required for each certification and renewal period.

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Item 5 – Office of Enforcement

- Bryan Elder, Section Manager of Office of Enforcement (OE), oversees Special Investigation Unit for Wastewater and Drinking Water operator certification. Bryan Provided an update, there are 9 currently active cases between programs. 4 active cases in wastewater. Disciplinary actions are taken by the source initially and then referred to the OE, referrals from Office of Operator Certification, CPO’s, and Agencies. There have been 10 new cases, and 8 closed in the last 6 months. 7 official actions have been taken; reprimands on operators and notice of violations to the agencies. There are no pending actions currently. Reprimands can be issued for a handful of reasons; operator operating with expired cert, or without cert, failure to maintain a CPO. Each situation is evaluated.
- Steve Krai asked about any enforcement on hyperion incident. Bryan stated there is an active investigation.
- No further questions.

Item 6 – Program Update

- Neal Funston, Supervisor of Wastewater Operator Certification provided the below chart listing grades passes and fails percentage per grade. Business as usual and the department is very current on processing times. If you have an operator that is having issues, please have him contact us. On staff a recent seasonal clerk hired and we look to fill our AGPA position soon.

WASTEWATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (WWOCP)

CUMULATIVE COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PASS/FAIL

CUMULATIVE COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PASS/FAIL – WWOCP				
Reporting Period: February 20, 2021 (CBT Inception) – November 25, 2022				
Grade	Examinees	Pass Count	Fail Count	Pass Percent
Grade 1	687	370	317	54%
Grade 2	680	376	304	55%
Grade 3	619	190	429	31%
Grade 4	193	46	147	24%
Grade 5	311	84	227	27%
Totals	2490	1066	1424	43%

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- Total passing rates on CBT compared to written are slightly lower. Partial credit is no longer given. All questions are multiple choice, and there is no way to check math. Previously with paper, if they were close to passing, they could have been awarded partial credit.
 - Norah – Have pass points been considered?
 - Neal – This hasn't been discussed
 - Annette – We went from written to multiple choice. WW had written responses. It is a give and take and evens out.
 - Neal – with computer based we are able to analyze the questions, if a lot of people are getting them wrong.
 - Christine – Can we show the data?
 - Julie – questions are confidential.
- Can operators ask for the equivalency sheet on paper instead of on the computer? This is something that can be considered and will negotiate on our next contract. As well as bringing in their own calculator.
- Online Application Portal
 - Working with DIT on the Online Portal project and we are on schedule to begin in 2023, no definitive date yet. Hoping first quarter we will have the first phase roll out. Grade 1 and 2 examinations for DW and WW. Although nothing has been finalized, each phase will roll out about 90 days after first phase.
 - The online portal will not necessarily be faster than mail due to staffing and processing times remain the same.
 - With the application portal in place, will there still be paper option? Paper will be temporary, as there will be some issues to work out. However, it will all be online eventually.
- Operator Customer Service Survey
 - Hope to have it online and available in January sometime. The survey will be sent out to those on our subscription list, make sure to join subscription list. It is to find out how we can help serve you better. Strongly suggest joining list. Some feedback was given that the survey was too long, perhaps some

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questions could be shorted, combined. Perhaps, also if questions are answered no or yes possibly the next question doesn't apply and isn't shown. Marketing recommends a survey to be 5-7 minutes.

- Sub Work Group Updates
 - AB 1588 – legislation passed 2019 that calls for evaluation of military experience. How to recognize and apply credit.
 - Norah Duffy presented slides from group with clear objectives and goals and recognizing reciprocity. Aim to create similar process for DW & WW. Looking at what other states processes are for reciprocity and application process, etc, in their program, to gather resources that are already out there. Currently the goal is 12 months. North Carolina is one state being evaluated, which will accelerate the process, rather than starting from scratch. Currently there is no exam given in the military for certification, however, there is direct training that is similar. This is to provide a path for those that are coming out of the military with the similar experience needed. Possibly looking at reciprocity.
 - Operator in Training Requirements/Experience
 - Developed a survey to ask within the industry; CWEA, CASA, AWWA, CRWA. The group is now analyzing the data received back. There were over 400 responses with everyone on their own looking at the data and plans to provide feedback next meeting. Overall gist of it is that everyone feels what is in place is adequate to protect public health but there is room for improvement, however a very diverse set of recommendations. Group met with Dan DeMoss for an in depth look at how it impacts rural communities. Send Neal Funston an email should anyone be interested in joining a group.
 - Josh Vieira – Important to have education as it was added back in 2013 by advisory committee. Maybe require education after getting OIT's might get more applicants. It is important to get the field experience first.
 - Guidelines for Reporting Operator Experience
 - Louis Sun reported the group met several times and established their vision and mission statements. Look into current process and procedures. Obtained a document to review regarding underground regulation and experience guidelines. Good starting point in

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framework. Julie advised that document would have to be revised and approved of first. This is DW focused and goal is to make DW and WW more similar.

- One Water Regime
 - Greg Williams, Valley Water San Jose, reported group consists of people outside of the Waterboards. Mission statement is to assist waterboards to define one water concept as relates to OOC and identify any policy changes to that. There are 3 tasks focused on; submit definitions to advisory committee, include suggestions to identify reciprocity, further identify barriers for career growth. SWAT analysis method is being driven by John. Encourage people to join the group or to provide information is an option as well. All and any viable opinions are welcome.
- Christine Gordon stated thank you for your excellent work and for your commitment to all on sub groups.

Item 7 – Future Discussion Item:

- **Advisory Committee Meetings: Purpose, Expectations, and Structure**
 - Consider months to hold meetings to discuss in next meeting. They were previously based on the written exam dates, but this is no longer valid due to computer based testing. This opens us up to any dates and frequency of meetings. To consider is the CWEA & AWWA conferences held in April/May. Spring and fall may be good months for meetings, possibly April and October. Possibly syncing WW and DW advisory committee meetings on same day.
 - Ramzi Mahmood requested to have an advance glance at the agendas to allow for advisory committee members to have comments, etc. ahead of time.
 - Christine Gordon mentioned that we would like to get members feedback on the structure of the meetings, expectations, and topics.

Item 8 - Schedule Next Advisory Committee Meeting:

- The next WW Advisory Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held on April 26, 2023, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM possibly in person.