

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

WATER UTILITY OPERATOR LICENSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 18, 2018

9:00 a.m.

TCEQ

12100 Park 35 Circle, Bldg. B, Room 201

Austin, Texas

Meeting Summary

Members Attending

Robb Starr
Paul Kite
Celia Eaves
Russell Hamilton
Rey Davila
David Garza
Tanny Busby
Gary Sober
Kenneth Hutchins
Cory Moose
Joseph McDaniel

TCEQ Staff Attending

Jaya Zyman, PRS
Linda Saladino, PRS
Paul Munguia, PRS
Sarita Nazareth, PRS
Jenn Grossman, PRS
James Murphy, PRS
Sandra Lowe-Leseth, PRS
Alaina Teller, PRS
Ashley Robledo, PRS
Fayyaz Mughal, PRS
Tamara Calhoun, PRS
Shannon Frazier, WSD
Laurie Fleet, WQD

Call to order:

Quorum check - quorum present.

A motion & second were made to approve the meeting summary from July 26, 2018. Russell Hamilton made the motion, Joseph McDaniel seconded, and all members approved.

Attendee introduction:

Round table introduction.

Water Quality Division (WQD) Updates: Laurie Fleet (WQD)

Laurie Fleet did not have any updates, but was available for questions.

Members Absent

Leonard Leinfelder
Donald Reese

Visitors Attending

David James

Gary Sober had questions regarding requirements for treated wastewater intended for reuse within a facility and how TCEQ investigators were interpreting and applying the Domestic Wastewater Design Criteria (Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 217). His understanding was that those design criteria were not intended to be used for process control in operations. In addition, he was seeking clarification on chlorine residual limits for treated effluent intended for reuse within a facility even if it wasn't being discharged into a receiving water body. According to this understanding, TCEQ investigators were requiring facilities to meet chlorine residual limits for reuse and these high concentrations of chlorine were causing foaming problems.

Laurie mentioned that some requirements apply for reuse of treated domestic wastewater depending on whether it is type I or Type II reuse (according to possible human contact). However, if the treated effluent was being recirculated to the headworks, she believes this would not be considered a reuse system, but she will investigate further.

The group also questioned how the Water Quality Division evaluates new technologies for Domestic Wastewater Treatment and what has recently been permitted.

The committee also mentioned a need for industry-specific training related to electrical and mechanical processes in wastewater systems. Also, Laurie asked if there was training specific for collection operators of pressure sewers as recent issues show this training is also needed. The only required training regarding pressure systems is in the core Collections course.

At one of the next meetings, Laurie Fleet (WQD) and Jaya Zyman (PRS) will work together to ensure that the appropriate TCEQ staff are available to address the group's questions.

Water Supply Division (WSD) Updates: Shannon Frazier (WSD)

Shannon Frazier provided an update for the Water Supply Division. See attached information for details. Members had questions related to the regulations of the mobile water systems ("man camps") and water haulers in the western part of Texas. The process to report these systems is to contact the regional office and then central office in Austin follows up. More information can be provided at the next meeting.

Occupational Licensing (OL) Update: Tamara Calhoun (PRS OL)

Tamara Calhoun, Work Leader, provided 4th quarter comparisons of new and renewed licenses and exams administered (see attached). She also provided pass rates for all exams. Tamara then gave a demonstration of the functionality of the new online application process, known as OLEA. At the time of this presentation, OLEA had only been functional for about a week. Out of the 130 applications, there were only three (3) errors which were all corrected. At the next meeting, Tamara will give a follow-up report on how the system is functioning.

Review Criminal History Guidance for Low Risk: Ivan Messer (PRS OL)

Ivan Messer provided a brief overview of the criminal history evaluation process. Tanny Busby had a question regarding whether or not the results of the evaluation or any specific criminal history is shared with the individual's employer. The TCEQ does not share criminal history nor inform the employer of the TCEQ evaluation outcome. Additional information related to TCEQ's criminal review process can be found in a regulatory guidance document, RG-521: *Consequences of Criminal*

Convictions for Occupational Licensing located on the TCEQ Occupational Licensing website. Ivan provided a handout summarizing the relevant parts of this guidance for water operator, wastewater operators, customer service inspectors, and backflow prevention assembly testers.

Wastewater/Water Operator Exam Analysis by Category: Sarita Nazareth (PRS OL)

Sarita Nazareth presented an exam analysis by category listing the number of questions in a category and the percentage of testers selecting the correct answer (see attached). In general, the categories with lower percentages of correct answers tended to have questions including math, disinfection chemistry and chemical analysis related to disinfection. Also, the distribution or collections category on wastewater treatment or water treatment operator exams had lower scores. These categories are included on these exams because licensed “treatment operators” are allowed by TCEQ rules to operate distribution or collection systems. Testers need to study all courses required to obtain the license, including the initial basic courses which include general topics like safety, rules, and processes not covered in the more advanced treatment courses.

Update/Revisions to *RG-002: Process Control Tests for Wastewater Treatment Facilities*: Sarita Nazareth (PRS OL)

Sarita stated that she is working to finalize the regulatory guidance (RG) document for process control tests for wastewater treatment facilities. Gary will send Sarita a list of how he manages process control; which may be helpful information to incorporate into the general section of the document. This document is not intended for enforcement/compliance, but rather to help investigators. The group requested a comment be included in the RG regarding its purpose (guidance vs. compliance). Tanny Busby suggested adding the significance of the glossary items to the document and will send to Sarita. Sarita will send this RG to members for additional comments.

Finalize Modifications to the *Basic Water Works Operation Curriculum*: James Murphy (PRS OL)

James Murphy received input regarding modification to the Basic Water course. Cory Moose previously provided comments. The group generally felt that math needed more emphasis, or that at least it had to be broken up into small portions in each chapter, rather than a standalone chapter. Another suggestion was to have a math pre-test to gauge the level of the students.

There was some agreement that more time was probably needed to sufficiently cover all of the modules. However, the suggestion of increasing the duration of the course from 20 to 24 hours was met with some resistance. This led to further dialogue about expanding the training requirements for a D License; rather than trying to include more material into the Basic Water curriculum.

Another topic which generated some debate was the need to have more time devoted to chloramines in the Disinfection module. If a class is mostly geared towards Ground Water operators, it was brought up that this might not be as relevant. However, with the growing use of chloramines in the State of Texas, others felt it was still deserving of more attention.

Wrap-up Discussion: Robb Starr (WUOLAC Chair)

Linda Saladino informed the group that in the future, the “A” water exam would be revised and requested the group submit any challenging questions or relevant topics to be considered for the revised exam.

Also, Sarita Nazareth is working on finishing the updates for the Wastewater Collections II and III exams and the Groundwater C exams. Items for these exams will be further considered in the exam review session following the meeting.

Adjourn

Enclosures:

WSD Update Summary