

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
WATER UTILITY OPERATOR LICENSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 23, 2011
9:30 a.m.

TCEQ
12100 Park 35 Circle, Bldg. A, 2nd Flr., Rm. 202
Austin, Texas

MINUTES

Members Attending

Matthew Boober
Sharon Clark
James Fischer
Russell Hamilton
Ginger Laird
Adrian Montemayor
William Quinn
Bobby Russell
Allen Schreiber
Roy Staggs
Ghulam Sumdani
Michael Vollmar

Members Absent

Larry West

TCEQ Staff Attending

Joseph Hildenbrand, PRS
Barbara Mendieta, PRS
Sarita Nazareth, PRS
Terry Thompson

Others

Rob Starr

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Matthew Boober, Chairman of the WUOLAC committee. A quorum was confirmed. The members, guests and TCEQ staff were introduced. The minutes of the November 18, 2010 meeting were approved.

Basic Electrical Repair, Safety and Maintenance to be included in Operator Training

Operations Manager for Lumberton M. U. D, Rob Starr, opened up a discussion requesting basic electrical training for water operators. There was a mixed reaction from the members. There is a need for electrical training; however, there is a liability issue. Electrical job functions can only be performed by licensed

electricians. There are operators who are performing electrical jobs without a proper license risking their lives. Currently, there is very little safety information with respect to electrical do's and don'ts. The committee discussed the benefits of having a short electrical safety elective course discussing the dangers of improper handling of electricity, in order to ensure the safety of the water and wastewater operators. However, it will depend upon a training provider to submit a training proposal/ application.

Contractors are exempt from being licensed – what options do we have?

Rob Starr expressed concern over contractors who are installing water and wastewater lines without having a license. This is a growing problem and needs to be handled with proper contract management and documentation indicating a need for contract management training for operators

The question arose whether we should hold contractors to licensing standards. Other solutions to the problem included that project managers have at least a D or C level license.

Ground Water Production Training Issues

Barbara Mendieta initiated a discussion on whether Water Distribution should be a required core course for the C Ground Water license (CGW) (instead of an elective course option)

Due to new additional GW content and the 20-hour time constraint, the most recent TEEEX GW classroom and correspondence training manuals (approved April 2008 & April 2011) moved Chapter/Module 11 on Storage & Distribution to an appendix . The material will not be covered in class, but students will be instructed to independently review the information as it is covered on the CGW exam.

1. Distribution content removed includes: types of storage; storage tank disinfection; operation, maintenance, & inspection of storage facilities; purpose & components of distribution system; routine operation & maintenance of distribution system; construction work; trench safety; and sanitary protection.
2. There are 14 questions pertaining to water distribution and storage on the CGW exam.
3. Curriculum Guidance for GW course stipulates the GW training course will include content on water distribution and storage – Does this need to be revised? Probably yes as TEEEX is currently the sole publisher/provider of GW manual.
4. Need-to-Know Criteria for the CGW license indicates operators should know the various types of storage; know purposes of storage; maintenance, inspection and disinfection procedures for storage and distribution

facilities; causes and effects of corrosion in storage and distribution systems; operating procedures, preventive and corrective maintenance procedures, and safety procedures for the following: meters, flushing equipment, hydrants, construction and installation equipment, pumps, motors and generators pipes and joints, valves and fittings; leak detection procedures; critical safeguards of distribution systems. - Does this need to be revised? Probably not.

5. Significance – Consider what percentage of a GW operator’s duties is in distribution at a small, medium, or large GW system?
6. Impact – Consider how many GW systems have single CGW operators solely operating their system?

A consensus was reached and all members agreed that Distribution should be a required core course for the CGW license instead of an elective.

Update on WUOLAC Recommendations:

Russell Hamilton requested an update on the recommendation made by the WUOLAC on the issues of renewal of D Water and Wastewater licenses and the recommendations regarding Advanced (A and B) licenses. Joseph Hildenbrand responded that at this time, the recommendations have been backed by the Public Drinking Water Team and the Regional Staff as we wait to begin the Commission’s Rule Making Process.

HB-965 Continuing Education Requirements for Individuals with TCEQ issued licenses.

Terry Thompson discussed some of the bills that The Occupational Licensing Section was dealing with. Below is a summary of the bills discussed.

Legislative Initiated Rulemaking

<p>HB 965 Enrolled Sent to Governor</p>	<p>Relating to continuing education requirements for persons holding licenses issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.</p>
<p>This bill would require rulemaking changes to 30 TAC Chapter 30, Occupational Licensing, Subchapter A to include the method by which a license holder, specifically Class ‘A’ or ‘B’ public water system or domestic wastewater treatment operators (operators) can certify at the time of renewal that they have completed their continuing education hours.</p>	

<p>HB 1674 Enrolled Sent to Governor</p>	<p>Relating to procedures for establishment, modification, and enforcement of child support obligations.</p>
<p>This bill would require rulemaking changes to 30 TAC Chapter 30, Occupational Licensing, Subchapter A to include denial of an application for a new or renewal of an occupational license. Currently, under the rules, the commission may only suspend an</p>	

existing license or registration. Additionally, language would need to be added to 30 TAC, Chapter 30 to allow the agency to recover the administrative cost associated with suspending an occupational license or denying an application for a new occupational license.

HB 197 Engrossed S Referred to Transportation & Homeland Sec.	Relating to the provision of certain documentation before a person may engage in a licensed occupation; providing a criminal penalty.
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This bill would require rulemaking changes to 30 TAC Chapter 30, Occupational Licensing, Subchapter A to include a subsection on Eligibility for Employment in the United States.

SB 1733 Enrolled	Relating to the occupational licensing of spouses of members of the military.
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This bill would require rulemaking changes to 30 TAC Chapter 30, Occupational Licensing, Subchapter A, to include provisions to allow applicants who are spouses of persons serving on active military duty to demonstrate competency to meet the requirements of a license in alternative ways and to seek employment or work.

SB 867 Enrolled	Relating to testing accommodations for a person with dyslexia taking a licensing examination administered by a state agency.
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This bill would not require any rulemaking changes. 30 TAC Chapter 30, Occupational Licensing, Subchapter A. The existing rules already include language stating that “any qualified applicant with a physical, mental, or developmental disability make request reasonable accommodations to take an examination.”

Note: All of the above legislative initiated rulemaking could be combined into one rulemaking package as all the required amendments would be to 30 TAC Chapter 30, Subchapter A.

Special Rulemaking:

TCEQ worked with Senator Estes and developed a process to assist military installations in Texas to address their unique needs of Water Operator training and licensing. The process developed addresses the issue on a temporary basis. Therefore, management assured Senator Estes that the licensing rules would be amended to incorporate a permanent resolution to the issue. This will require amending 30 TAC Chapter 30, Subchapter K. The amended rules will allow qualified military personnel to public water sampling duties at the bases without having to obtain a TCEQ issued public water system operator license.

Because the amendments to Subchapter K would only affect military personnel and installations and the fact that the military is supportive of the changes, this rulemaking should not be controversial. Therefore, this rulemaking could be combined with the legislative rulemaking package.

Training/ Licensing Update:

Joseph asked the members if there was any specific information that would be useful to know. Some of the requests included the pass rate for each level of license, the percentage of operators that get a B or C license skipping the in between levels of licenses and the particular areas on exams that are most difficult for operators.

Other Business:

The 20th Annual Water/Wastewater Training Provider Seminar is scheduled for July 25-27, 2011 right here at the TCEQ. The Nomination Process, to nominate members to the WUOLAC will begin in early August. The next meeting was scheduled for mid September.

The meeting was adjourned at noon