

*Texas Commission on Environmental Quality*  
**WATER UTILITY OPERATOR LICENSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
February 27, 2009  
9:30 a.m.

**TCEQ**  
12100 Park 35 Circle, Bldg. A, 3rd Flr, Rm. 328  
Austin, Texas

**MINUTES**

**Members Attending**

Russell L. Hamilton  
Carol V. Batterton  
Matthew Boober  
James W. Fischer  
Ginger C. Laird  
William F. Quinn  
Mark W. Routon  
Carola G. Serrato  
Ghulam Sumdani  
Michael Vollmar  
Larry West

**Members Absent**

Joseph G. Majdalani (P.E)  
Robert Rowell

**TCEQ Staff Attending**

Liza Coldewey, OCE  
Noreen Helmle, CSD  
Susan Hier, CSD  
Brian Lehmkuhle, CSD  
Barbara Mendieta, CSD  
Sandra Mota, CSD  
Sarita Nazareth, CSD  
Linda Saladino, CSD  
Allan Vargas, CSD

Russell Hamilton, Chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. A quorum was confirmed. The members, guests and TCEQ staff were introduced. The Minutes of the June 6, 2008 meeting were approved. Matthew Boober was elected as the Vice-Chair of the Water Utility Operator Licensing Advisory Committee.

## **Texas Small Water System Training Program**

Sandi Mota stated that 4 million dollars of the grant award is still available. The EPA has granted TCEQ through August 2010 to expend the funds. EPA approved TCEQ in January 2009 the ability to reimburse licensing fees for CSI and BPAT.

Additionally, the following metrics were provided.

- Water System enrollment: 3,346
- Operator enrollment: 6,636
- Water Systems pending enrollment: Approximately 1,200
- Class Training events held: 554
- Cluster Training events held: 715
- Licensing fees reimbursed: Approximately 240,000

The TCEQ is working to add BPAT courses to existing contracts through interagency agreements for an Invitation for Bid.

## **Computer-Based Testing (CBT)**

Susan Hier demonstrated a short computer based test. The key points of her presentation were:

- Applications must be pre-approved
- Candidates will receive immediate test results and analysis
- If candidate passes the CBT, the license will be issued within 5 days
- A nominal fee will be paid by the candidate to the Test Center for CBT administration

### **The following test centers are under contract to administer CBT:**

Midwestern State University - Wichita Falls, TX

The University of Texas at El Paso - El Paso, TX

Sam Houston State University - Huntsville, TX

West Texas A&M - Canyon, TX

The University of Texas at Brownsville – Brownsville TX

We hope to have 50+ test centers under contract by the end of 2009.

### **Implementation Schedule**

Customer Service Inspectors—Early 2009

Landscape Irrigators, Technicians, and Inspectors—To be phased in during 2009

Leaking Petroleum Storage Tank Corrective Action Project Managers—Early 2009

Municipal Solid Waste Facility Supervisors—Early 2009

Underground Storage Tank Removal On-Site Supervisors—Early 2009

Wastewater Treatment and Collection System Operators—to be phased in during 2009

Water Treatment and Distribution System Operators—To be phased in during 2009

Water Treatment Specialists—Early 2009

### **Training Update**

Linda introduced new staff assisting in the training review and approval area. She asked the members to find out areas of emphasis that need to be incorporated into training materials and exams and asked them to consider an exam review subcommittee. She also spoke about her concern to protect the integrity of exams.

Brian and Linda opened a brief discussion on some special topics that are (or have been) under discussion regarding whether or not they should be approved for water and/or wastewater licensing training credit. Also, where these special topics might be approvable, whether those topics should be approved for a small number of credit hours (i.e., as a concise overview) or for an increased number of credit hours towards an appropriate license(s). Special topics mentioned included those related to reverse osmosis (should it get wastewater credit?), green/sustainability (e.g., carbon footprint), and reuse of treated wastewater. There was some follow-up conversation regarding reuse topics, including from Russell Hamilton, with comments including:

- Post-treatment flows were in many cases moved via pressurized lines (with similarities to water distribution lines);
- The end use of reuse water was not just at golf courses and other locations near wastewater treatment facilities (i.e., thus wastewater operators might not be the only licensees involved), and
- There was an increasing desire to utilize reuse water to offset (thus conserve) treated water from public water supplies.

Brian also summarized previous discussions on storm water topics being approved for licensee credit hours. Basically, approval of some storm water topics can be considered towards a TCEQ wastewater license if session content is determined to be associated with licensee critical job tasks and presented as a concise overview. For example, a one-hour presentation on an appropriate section of Multi-Sector General Permit could be considered for approval. In conclusion, Linda and Brian indicated that they were open to comments from WUOLAC individuals after the meeting (just let them know).

### **Licensing Update**

Allan Vargas spoke about CBT being a big part of the Operator Licensing team. He also mentioned that Tarrant County College in Dallas Fort Worth is in the process of working with different associations and looking for additional partnerships to start a two year degree for a Water and Waste water Program.

In answering a question from a committee member regarding exams in Spanish only, Allan also mentioned that there were several House and Senate bills that deal directly with Occupational Licensing and a few dealing directly with state agencies not being allowed to use tax payer dollars to produce exams in any language but English.

### **Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting was scheduled for May 15, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.