

***Texas Commission on Environmental Quality***  
**Water Utility Operator Licensing Advisory Committee**

**February 22, 2008**

**9:30 a.m.**

**TCEQ**

***12100 Park 35 Circle, Bldg. A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Flr., Rm. 202***

***Austin, Texas***

**MINUTES**

**Members Attending**

Carol V. Batterton  
L. Russell Hamilton  
Ginger C. Laird  
George W. Patterson  
Robert T. Riley  
Robert Rowell  
David Sanders  
Carola G. Serrato  
Larry West  
David L. Yohe

**TCEQ Staff Attending**

Tamara Calhoun, Compliance Support Division (CSD)  
Noreen Helmle, CSD  
Susan Hier, CSD  
Mike Lannen, Water Supply Division  
Sandra Mota, CSD  
Linda Saladino, CSD  
Terry Thompson, CSD

**Members Absent**

Richard E. Harbuck

Joseph G. Majdalani, P.E.  
H. Ted Neumann, Jr.

### **Others Attending**

James Fischer, TEEX  
Sherman L. Irish, City of Houston

Russell Hamilton, Vice 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 September 21, 2007 meeting were approved.

### **Stormwater Update**

This presentation was rescheduled for the next meeting.

### **Direct Supervision & Process Control**

Mike Lannen of the Water Supply Division told the members that staff is currently developing guidance on direct supervision and process control and it will include a definition. There was a 30 minute discussion between the members and Mike about the issues with water and wastewater operators. He said he would provide their comments to the Drinking Water Advisory Work Group.

### **Training Update**

Linda Saladino told the members that RG-373 was now available on the TCEQ website. The current backlog of training approvals is targeted to be reduced by mid-March. The backlog was due to rule implementation, including revising RG-373 and the creation of a new training database. She thanked the training providers for their patience. The exam revision project has been prioritized. The water and wastewater exams that will be revised first are: Wastewater D, Water & Wastewater A and Surface Water B. This process will begin after the backlog has been reduced.

### **Texas Small Public Water Systems Training Program**

Sandra Mota reported that open enrollment in the program began June 1, 2007 and on-line enrollment began August 14, 2007. To date, 2,864 water systems and 5,353 operators have enrolled. There are currently 7 training providers participating in classroom training and 4 training providers participating in cluster training. The How-To videos have been replicated. The Basic Water Manual is not available for distribution yet, but it is being printed and mail out is anticipated in March 2008. Effective February 4, 2008, the program began offering online training for the following courses through TRWA: Basic Water Works Operations, Pump & Motor Maintenance, Water Utility Safety, Chlorinator

Systems, and Chemical Handling (Chlorinator Maintenance). More Cluster Course I (CCI) instructors were added during November 2007 – January 2008. Approximately 50% of the program members have received CCI training. CCII Train-the-Trainer Workshops are scheduled for next week and delivery of CCII to members will be shortly thereafter. \$130,000 in licensing fees have been paid with grant funds.

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

Susan Hier announced that she is currently working on the CBT project and had contacted several companies that provide the services. The decision has been made to build the CBT application in-house at TCEQ because it would be about the same cost and it could be implemented sooner by doing so. The contract specs will be signed off on Monday of next week. CBT for licensing will be available by August 2008 for some of the smaller licensing programs. CBT for Water and Wastewater licensing exams will be offered in 2009. She briefly explained the process. All applicants for CBT will be pre-approved. Four exams for each license will be randomly used. The list of approved proctor sites will be on the Licensing website. The applicant registers directly with the proctor and pays all proctor fees. Fees may vary by proctor. Exam results and analysis will be available immediately. Licenses could be issued within a few days. Applicants may be able to test more frequently. Operators have been very positive and receptive to the CBT option. Written exams will continue to be offered in the TCEQ region offices and in Austin, but some may not continue to offer them monthly. There may be as many as 24 proctors, but at least one per region the first year of the program. The pilot program will include the CSI, WTS and MSW exams. Carola Serrato asked if oral exams would be available by computer. Susan said that she would check with Department of Information Resources (DIR) about this.

### **New Committee Member Orientation**

For the benefit of the two new committee members, Ginger Laird and Robert Rowell, Noreen Helmle distributed copies of TAC 30, Ch. 5, Advisory Committees and Groups for review. She asked that they immediately review Rule 5.7, Membership and Rule 5.8, Attendance.

### **Nominations for Future New Committee Members**

Noreen Helmle distributed copies of the solicitation letter for nominations for new committee members. Five members' terms will end on August 31, 2008. She requested that each outgoing member provide at least one nomination to fill their vacancy.

### **TCEQ Annual Water/Wastewater Training Provider Seminar**

Noreen Helmle announced that the Seminar will be held in Austin on June 30, July 1 and July 2, 2008. Registration packets will be mailed in May, 2008.

### **Updates on Licensing and Agency Issues**

Terry Thompson thanked the committee members for the time and effort they give to the work of this committee. He gave the quarterly report of Water and Wastewater licensing activities. 80% of operators are renewing online now.

### **Next Meeting Date**

An e-mail will be sent to members regarding the date of the next meeting.