

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
WATER UTILITY OPERATOR LICENSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

August 12, 2021
9:00 a.m.

Virtual Meeting through Microsoft Teams

Meeting Minutes

Members Attending

Larry Bell
David Garza
Paul Kite
Crystal Ybanez
David Harris
Karen Menard
Cory Moose
Kenny Hutchins
Celia Eaves
Robb Starr
Jake Hollingsworth
Joseph McDaniel

Members Absent

Russell Hamilton

Visitors

Nichol Everingham
Gary Sober
Tom Acker
Steve Ash
John Taylor

TCEQ Staff Attending

Jaya Zyman, Occupational Licensing and Registration Division (OLRD)
Rebecca Moore, OLRD
Shannon Watson, OLRD
Paul Munguia, OLRD
James Murphy, OLRD
Benjamin Sakmar, OLRD
Tamara Calhoun, OLRD
Laurie Fleet, WQD
Leticia DeLeon, WSD
Jason Robinson, PPE

Call to order:

Quorum check – quorum present.

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from May 28, 2021 was made by David Garza, seconded by Joseph McDaniel, all members approved.

Attendee introduction:

All current and new members introduced themselves.

Water Supply Division (WSD) Updates: Dorothy Young

Summary for the EPP information under SB 3

The State Legislature passed Senate Bill 3 on June 6, 2021. The new law under Texas Water Code (TWC) Section 13.1394 requires all affected utilities across Texas to prepare and implement an Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP). The EPP applies to affected utilities and contains information about the water system and how it operates under emergency conditions which is submitted to TCEQ for review and approval. The plan proposes how the water system will maintain a water pressure of 20 psi (pounds per square inch) throughout the distribution system when the power has been off for more than 24 hours during an emergency and contains emergency contact information. The new law provides 14 options for a water system to choose from to meet this requirement.

According to TWC Section 13.1394, an affected utility is defined as a retail public utility, exempt utility, or provider or conveyor of potable or raw water service that furnishes water service to more than one customer; and is *not* an affected utility under Section 13.1395 of the TWC. Furthermore, the law requires water systems providing water under emergency conditions during an extended power outage must do so at a minimum water pressure of 20 psi.

Emergency Preparedness Plan template is on the TCEQ website:

https://www.tceq.texas.gov/drinkingwater/homeland_security/disasterprep/epp

If you have any questions you can call the EPP hotline (512) 965-2371 or send your questions to PDWEPP@tceq.texas.gov.

Free upcoming workshop

Be Resilient: Using Present Day Disasters to Plan for Tomorrow

August 17th & 18th, 9:00am – 4:00pm

TCEQ and TRWA

www.trwa.org/event/resilientaugust

David Garza asked if this only applies to water systems and not wastewater. Leticia DeLeon of the Water Supply Division confirmed the EPP is specific for water systems, but the TCEQ encourages the development of a plan for wastewater systems.

Water Quality Division (WQD) Updates: Laurie Fleet

Reminders:

- Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permittees are now required to electronically submit their sludge discharge monitoring reports and annual report that accompanies the discharge-monitoring reports using [NET](#). From the TCEQ homepage, search on “NET DMR.”

Questions can be sent to: wqap@tceq.texas.gov

- In wastewater discharge permits there is a provision that requires the permittee to submit an application for renewal at least 180 days before the expiration date of the permit. Historically this has not been enforced; however, the 180-day requirement will now be enforced. Failure to comply may result in a violation.
- The Water Treatment Plant General Permit was approved and issued at the October 7, 2020, commissioner's agenda. This permit authorizes the discharge of wastewater generated as a result of conventional water treatment at water treatment facilities into or adjacent to Waters of the State. Permittees with an individual permit do not have to wait until their current permit expires to get authorization under this general permit. This is limited to conventional treatment facilities, not for those using special treatment processes, such as RO, ion exchange, treatment for metals, or arsenic. Qualifying treatment facilities can apply for general permit authorization and cancel their individual permit. Details of the permit can be found by searching for "available general permits" from the main page of the [TCEQ website](#).

Occupational Licensing Updates: Tamara Calhoun

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the occupational licensing team granted waivers for BPAT licensing holders to obtain at least 8 hours of hands-on continuing education to renew their license. This waiver will end on 9/30/2021.

Attached are the licensing application statistical numbers. Of note, from quarter two to three, there has been an increase in all applications received, which is getting back to the numbers seen pre-pandemic.

Update on W/WW High School Programs: Shannon Watson

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has approved high school programs for the Water D and Wastewater Collection I as industrial-based credit courses that can be applied towards graduation. Under this program a student can take a Water D or Wastewater Collection I course their senior year of high school as well as take the exam. If the student passes the exam, while they cannot receive a license because water and wastewater entry level licenses require a high school diploma or GED, the TCEQ can issue the student a certificate of completion. This is similar to the certificate TCEQ issues to incarcerated individuals. Once the student receives a high school diploma or GED, the certificate will be converted to a full license.

Cory Moose asked for a list of high schools that are currently participating in this program. Shannon responded that this list would be difficult to obtain because once TEA approved the programs, individual high schools do not need to coordinate with the TCEQ to provide the courses.

The TCEQ is with working with TAWWA on a proposal for them to receive a grant to create TCEQ-approved training videos that would be made available to high schools free of charge.

Career Technology Education teachers could then administer these videos. This would remove the barrier that many high schools have coordinating with a training provider to teach and oversee a course over an entire semester. The next step would be to reach out to TEA to ask them to partner with TCEQ to make these videos available to all the regional education centers, making these resources available to all high schools in Texas.

Jaya mentioned that as part of the current Sunset review process, we are highlighting our efforts through high school programs to address the issue of filling the gap between a rapidly growing population and potential future lack of qualified water and wastewater operators to serve the community, specifically the rural community. If the group has any similar programs that TCEQ can support, please let us know.

Nichol Everingham of TRWA mentioned they are in the process of launching an apprenticeship program for water and wastewater operators and partnering with local utilities for field trips.

Gary Sober recommended also offering these videos to local junior colleges. Shannon agreed and mentioned that once the videos are approved and completed, the intent is to maximize their availability. Lastly, the group also asked for the videos to be in Spanish or translated in closed caption.

In-person exams resuming/revised exams: Shannon Watson

It is our intent to resume in-person paper exams starting September 2021. Each TCEQ region will offer exams quarterly and the schedule for the regions will be staggered.

The Irrigation Technician (English and Spanish), BPAT, and Collection exams have been updated and sent to all regions as well as on CBT.

Spanish exams availability: Paul Munguia

All entry level exams (Water D, Wastewater D, Wastewater Collection I, and Irrigation Technician) are currently available in Spanish as a paper exam. The WUOLAC group has previously mentioned that since most Water D level licenses must upgrade after three years to a Surface Water, Water Treatment, or Water Distribution C level license, whose exams are not currently translated, there is a need for these C level license exams to be made available in Spanish. We are actively working to translate all C level exams, as well as additional exams to meet this need. Lastly, our intent is to make these translated exams available on CBT. We are limited with technical limitations; however, we do have a plan on how to move forward.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Jake Hollingsworth and seconded by Joseph McDaniel

Contacts:

Shannon Watson: Shannon.watson@tceq.texas.gov

Tamara Calhoun: tamara.calhoun@tceq.texas.gov

James Murphy: james.murphy@tceq.texas.gov

Laurie Fleet: laurie.fleet@tceq.texas.gov

Dorothy Young: dorothy.young@tceq.texas.gov

TCEQ Licensing: licenses@tceq.texas.gov

DRAFT

Fiscal Year 2021
 BPAT, CSI, Water & Wastewater Operator Program Results
 3rd Quarter (March 1, 2021 – May 31, 2021)

| | New Applications Received | Renewal Applications Received | Total Applications Received | Tests Administered | Tests Passed | Percent Passed | New Licenses Issued | Renewal Licenses Issued | Total Current Licenses |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester | 198 | 452 | 650 | 200 | 94 | 47.0% | 82 | 407 | 5,539 |
| Grand Totals: | 198 | 452 | 650 | 200 | 94 | 47.0% | 82 | 407 | 5,539 |

| | New Applications Received | Renewal Applications Received | Total Applications Received | Tests Administered | Tests Passed | Percent Passed | New Licenses Issued | Renewal Licenses Issued | Total Current Licenses |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Customer Service Inspector | 82 | 172 | 254 | 104 | 47 | 45.2% | 41 | 162 | 2,096 |
| Grand Totals: | 82 | 172 | 254 | 104 | 47 | 45.2% | 41 | 162 | 2,096 |

| | New Applications Received | Renewal Applications Received | Total Applications Received | Tests Administered | Tests Passed | Percent Passed | New Licenses Issued | Renewal Licenses Issued | Total Current Licenses |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Ground Water Treatment Operator - B | 18 | 78 | 96 | 23 | 10 | 43.5% | 11 | 81 | 765 |
| Ground Water Treatment Operator - C | 139 | 240 | 379 | 197 | 84 | 42.6% | 78 | 255 | 3,286 |
| Surface Water Treatment Operator - B | 55 | 87 | 142 | 69 | 17 | 24.6% | 16 | 89 | 904 |
| Surface Water Treatment Operator - C | 80 | 131 | 211 | 109 | 58 | 53.2% | 57 | 135 | 1,831 |
| Water Distribution Operator - B | 47 | 50 | 97 | 68 | 13 | 19.1% | 13 | 54 | 623 |
| Water Distribution Operator - C | 197 | 196 | 493 | 236 | 100 | 42.4% | 95 | 294 | 3,534 |
| Water Operator - A | 75 | 127 | 202 | 122 | 18 | 14.8% | 17 | 129 | 1,224 |
| Water Operator - D | 517 | 170 | 687 | 760 | 296 | 38.9% | 294 | 170 | 4,225 |
| Grand Totals: | 1,128 | 1,079 | 2,307 | 1,584 | 596 | n/a | 581 | 1,207 | 16,392 |



3rd Quarter (March 1, 2021 – May 31, 2021)

| | New Applications Received | Renewal Applications Received | Total Applications Received | Tests Administered | Tests Passed | Percent Passed | New Licenses Issued | Renewal Licenses Issued | Total Current Licenses |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Wastewater Collection I | 100 | 54 | 154 | 122 | 90 | 73.8% | 86 | 55 | 922 |
| Wastewater Collection II | 74 | 120 | 194 | 125 | 52 | 41.6% | 52 | 114 | 1,481 |
| Wastewater Collection III | 67 | 98 | 165 | 116 | 25 | 21.6% | 24 | 97 | 1,151 |
| Wastewater Treatment A | 40 | 102 | 142 | 56 | 19 | 33.9% | 19 | 113 | 1,040 |
| Wastewater Treatment B | 74 | 166 | 240 | 88 | 47 | 53.4% | 49 | 180 | 2,019 |
| Wastewater Treatment C | 196 | 239 | 435 | 274 | 101 | 36.9% | 94 | 247 | 3,207 |
| Wastewater Treatment D | 203 | 53 | 256 | 281 | 164 | 58.4% | 160 | 47 | 1,828 |
| Grand Totals: | 754 | 832 | 1,586 | 1,062 | 498 | n/a | 484 | 853 | 11,648 |

Compare FY21_Q3 to FY21_Q2

BPAT -

- Total Applications received increased 20.2%
- Total Tests Administered increased 29.5%

CSI -

- Total Applications received increased 44.5%
- Total Tests Administered increased 25%

Water -

- Total Applications received increased 22.2%
- Total Tests Administered increased 27.7%

Wastewater -

- Total Applications received increased 24.9%
- Total Tests Administered increased 25.2%

DRAFT