Certification Program External Review

Certification Program Advisory Committee
Harrisburg, PA
November 5, 2015

Tom Wolf, Governor
John Quigley, Secretary

External Review Timeline

• March 11 – Identify priority elements
• May 28 – DEP provides updates and compiled data to CPAC on priority elements
• July 6 – Prepare draft external review report
• November 5 – DEP provides updates to CPAC on survey results; CPAC action needed on report
• December 10 – present findings to the State Board for Certification of Water and Wastewater Systems Operators
Basics

• Survey was open July 1 to September 30 (three months)
• Advertised by:
  – *Drinking Water News*
  – All industry associations, all approved exam providers, and the Water Utility Council
  – Index card flyer distributed at exams, conferences, and other training events. Also included with certificate renewals during the survey period.
  – DEP field staff promotion with systems
  – DEP website

Respondents

• 494 individuals completed the survey
  – 471 completed all applicable questions
  – 376 certified operators (represents 4.4 percent of certified operator population)
  – 50 circuit riders
  – 80 system owners
• Average completion time: 11 minutes
Type of System

- Wastewater system: 313 (52%)
- Water system: 246 (41%)
- Not currently at a system: 42 (7%)

Respondent Gender

- Male: 405 (87%)
- Female: 47 (13%)

Total Answered: 452
Respondent Age

- 18 to 30: 7%
- 31 to 45: 25%
- 46 to 55: 30%
- 56 to 65: 33%
- Over 65: 5%

456 Answered

Respondent Experience

- <10 years: 27%
- 10 to 20 years: 25%
- 21 to 30 years: 23%
- More than 30 years: 25%

460 Answered
Respondent Salary

- <$30,000: 6%
- $30,000 to $45,000: 21%
- $45,001 to $60,000: 29%
- $60,001 to $80,000: 30%
- > $80,000: 14%

436 Answered

2010 versus 2015

- Difficult to compare 2010 to 2015 survey results
- Although some questions were similar, the electronic survey made it possible to use rating scales
  - 2010 survey was primarily yes or no
- Cannot compare scaled responses to yes/no
For many of the ranking scale (1-5) questions, we observed a bell curve tilted to the positive.

**Category: DEP Services**

- DEP services included:
  - Website
  - Earthwise Academy
  - Certification staff
  - Field inspectors
- Questions on scaled rating all received generally positive tilt
Category: Exam Services

- Exam services included:
  - Travel distance to exam sites
  - Paper vs. online exams
- Results tilted to the positive
- 55 percent prefer electronic exams to paper

Category: Training

- Training included:
  - Materials for exam prep
  - DEP modules
  - Finding courses for Con Ed
  - Variety of course topics available
  - Delivery format preference
- All scaled question results tilted to the positive
- We also gathered data on preferred delivery format and training topic needs
Category: Owner Responsibilities

- Mostly information-gathering questions focusing on responsibilities
  - Results showed general understanding of requirements
- Also note:

Rate your difficulty in finding properly certified operators to run your system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Difficult</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Easy</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reasons, if any, have you heard for operators not wanting to become certified?

- More risk: 36%
- More reports: 11%
- I haven't heard any: 15%
- Other: 18%
- Additional work: 20%

Category: Operator Responsibilities

- Mostly information-gathering questions with a focus on operator responsibilities
- Generally positive results, the majority of operators know their responsibilities
- About half of the 50 circuit rider respondents indicated that they have provided work plans and management plans to the system owners
- Most operators feel there should be a limit on the number of facilities a circuit rider operates
General Comments

- DEP received 226 general comments in the “Any other thoughts” section
- DEP will consider each comment and review the information for trends

Summary Observations

- Survey revealed general satisfaction with DEP services (website, Earthwise, staff, exams)
- Ratings of DEP modules have improved but DEP will continue to modify
- Course topic suggestions received from 220 respondents:
  - Will be organized and shared with training providers
- Classroom courses are still preferred, but web-based training also ranked high
Summary Observations

- Owners reported difficulty in finding properly certified operators (of 84 owners, 49 percent reported it be difficult or very difficult)
- Majority of owners and operators appear to be aware of primary responsibilities
- There is a need for DEP to continue training and informing circuit riders of their responsibilities, including management plans

Questions?

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