



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Services



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

**California Operator Certification Program – Annual Report
(June 30, 2005 – June 30, 2006)**

Water Treatment Operators

There are currently 10,835 water treatment operators certified by the California Department of Health Services (CDHS). This represents a 5.4 % reduction from last year. Although the total number of certified water treatment operators has decreased there has been an increase in the number of candidates taking the exam. Approximately 1,255 applicants participated in the exam during each of the last three exam cycles. This represents a 20% increase over previous exams. The majority of examinees (76%) are not currently certified.

Water Distribution Operators

There are 14,866 certified water distribution operators in California. This represents an increase of 14% over last year. The number of examinees per exam cycle has increased to approximately 3,500.

Interim Distribution Certification (Section 63810)

Interim certification was established to allow water systems to obtain certification for the distribution operators they employed on December 31, 2000, the day before the regulations took effect. This type of certification is non-transferable to other water systems and expired on December 31, 2003. The interim certificate could be renewed once for an additional three years if the operator met all of the current renewal requirements including obtaining continuing education. All interim certificates that were renewed in 2004 will expire on December 31, 2006. No more renewals are allowed.

There are currently 2,930 operators holding interim water distribution certificates. Approximately 25% of these operators will take the water distribution exam in October 2006. When the interim distribution certificates expire in January 2007 the Department will notify the interim operators, primacy agencies and water systems that are affected by the expiration of interim certificates.



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Exam Validation

Water Treatment Exam Validation

In April 2006 the Department signed a contract with CPS to validate the questions in our water treatment item bank. This year we will hold validation meetings with Subject Matter Experts to review and categorize the questions based on the recent job analysis completed by the Department.

Water Distribution Exam Validation

A job analysis survey is being prepared by CPS to validate the water distribution job analysis that was prepared by a group of Subject Matter Experts. Once the survey is complete CPS will produce a job analysis report that will be the basis for a new examination plan for the certification of water distribution operators.

Stakeholders Meetings

A Stakeholders Committee continues to meet twice a year to discuss implementation of the operator certification regulations. This Committee represents organizations and groups of people who are affected by the regulations. Membership includes the DHS Drinking Water Program, US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA), California-Nevada section of AWWA, Local Union 39, California Rural Water Association (CRWA), Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), water distribution instructors and operators from water systems. The Committee recently completed a review of the Operator Certification regulations and recommended some changes to the regulation language. These changes will be incorporated into a regulation update package in the future. The Department reviewed the Committee membership in April 2006 and decided to include additional members beginning with the September 2006 meeting. The purpose of these additions is to enhance the representation of water treatment and distribution operators on the Committee. The meetings are held twice a year in February and September.

Summary

Certification	# Certified	% Change	Notes
Water Treatment Operators	10,835	-5.4%	We currently test 2,000 candidates annually, exams held twice a year.
Interim Distribution certificates	2,930	-15%	Expires 12/31/2006, cannot be renewed. 598 hold certificates at a lower level than their interim certificate. 692 interim operators scheduled for the October exam.
Distribution Operators (regular certification)	14,866	+14%	We currently test 6,000 candidates annually, exams held twice a year.