

Facts About KDHE Water and Wastewater Certification Programs

According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, on January 28, 2013, there were 1,968 certified water system operators and 1,699 certified wastewater utility operators in Kansas. I thought I would take this opportunity to explain a bit about the certification programs. The Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA) works closely with the KDHE certification department to ensure that those attending qualified training sessions receive appropriate credit. The KDHE staff members are Vickie Wessel and Teresa Schuyler. It has been a pleasure to have worked with Teresa and Vickie over many years.

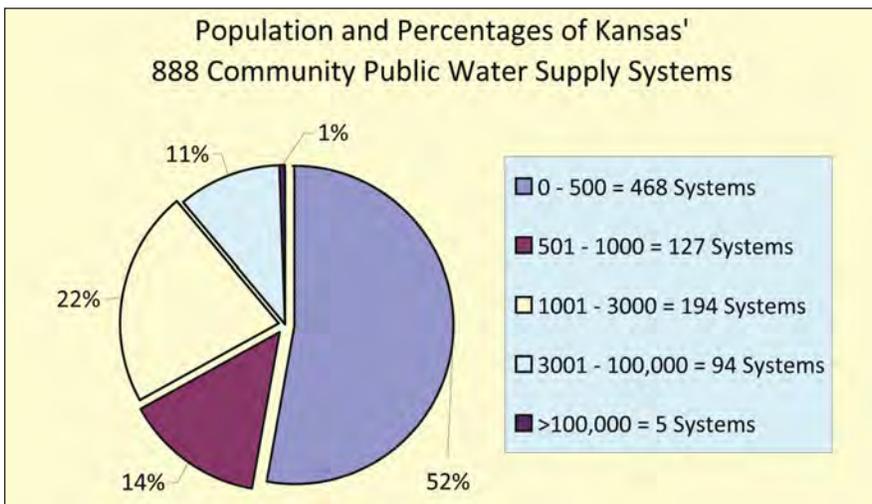
The Kansas Rural Water Association (KRWA) provides the forum for the certification exams at its annual conference. Applications for exams must be requested from KDHE by calling the certification section at 785-296-5511 or the applications may also be requested online at www.kdheks.gov/water/www.html. KDHE requires the applications for exams to be submitted to the agency no less than two weeks prior to the date of the exam.

Water and wastewater operators play a significant role in protecting public health and the environment. People who are entrusted to operate these public utilities need to demonstrate that they have a knowledge of the requirements to ensure safe water and operations that meet the needs of citizens.

Kansas has more than 1,000 permitted public water supply systems and 912 wastewater treatment facilities. Kansas regulations require that every public water or wastewater system be operated by someone who is certified or registered with KDHE as an “Operator

In Training”. Individuals who operate water systems must meet minimum training and experience standards to assure that water utilities are operated in a manner so as to provide water that is safe to drink. Wastewater treatment plant operators must be trained so they can operate wastewater treatment facilities in a manner that prevents the release of excessive pollutants.

The operation and maintenance of water and wastewater systems however requires much more than dealing with regulations – it begins with making sure the physical aspects of the system are functioning. KRWA notes that many local RWD boards and city councils are under the impression that only a certified operator can collect samples or report chlorine residuals. That is not the



Classification of Water Systems in Kansas Required Experience for Certification of Operator(s)			
Class	Operator Experience	Description	Population
Small Systems	6 months	1. Distribution System Only 2. Chlorination of groundwater only	<501
I	1 year	1. Chlorination of groundwater only 2. *Treatment of groundwater	501 - 1500 <501
II	1 year	1. Chlorination of groundwater only 2. *Treatment of groundwater 3. Treatment of Surface Water	1501 - 5000 501 - 2500 <2501
III	2 years	1. Chlorination of groundwater only 2. *Treatment of groundwater or surface water	5001 - 20,000 2501 - 10,000
IV	2 years	1. Chlorination of groundwater only 2. *Treatment of groundwater or surface water	>20,000 >10,000

*Includes iron and manganese removal, softening, membrane filtration, coagulation, sedimentation, filtration, re-carbonation and chemical addition other than chlorine.

KDHE also requires that any training session be a minimum of five hours long in order for the sponsoring agency to award training credits.

case. Kansas regulations only require that the system be operated under the guidance of a person who is certified.

Depending on their level of certification, operators must attend between five and 10 hours of continued education courses every two years to maintain their certification. KDHE also requires that any training session be a minimum of five hours long in order for the sponsoring agency to award training credits. Recently, Kansas One Call provided notice that the contractors' meetings would no longer be allowed to award operator credit. Typically those functions only included a discussion of locate services and a meal for those attending.

KRWA facilitated 91 training sessions in 2012, plus the ten five-hour preconference and the 48 concurrent sessions at the Annual Conference. In attendance were 3,334 water and wastewater operators, 362 administrative personnel for cities and rural water districts, 391 board/council members and 1,603 private individuals and 121 regulatory agency personnel. This is a significant number of people attending training.

In 2012, KDHE proctored the water and wastewater exams at the Annual KRWA Conference. The exams given were for Small System, Class I, II, III and IV operators for water and wastewater.

Those taking the Small System and Class I exams had the highest percentage of passing the certification exam. The exams for Class II, III and IV are more difficult and require more

knowledge and preparation. All training providers also need to provide expanded training to assist operators to achieve higher certification. Increasing the current level of certification is an asset to the community they serve and also to the person who has achieved the certification.

Let's Pull Together!

The 2013 Conference and Exhibition is KRWA's 46th annual conference. Eight preconference sessions will be held on Tuesday, March 26. Some are for operators; others are for administrative personnel and board/council members and are suitable for both cities and RWDs. The conference features 48 additional concurrent sessions on Wednesday and

Thursday with topics ranging from regulatory updates, funding, a host of operation and maintenance issues, new technology and personnel issues. The presenters and moderators for these sessions are combining their efforts to match the conference theme. "Let's Pull Together". I hope you will plan now to attend the 2013 Conference and Exhibition.

Greg Duryea has worked for KRWA since 1993 as Technical Assistant. He presently manages the Emergency Operator Program, with a variety of other responsibilities. He holds a Class I water certification and is the certified operator for Sycamore Springs Resort in Brown County.



Water and Wastewater Operator Information*

Certified Water Operators as of December 31, 2012

Class	Number	
SS	495	
I	420	
II	445	
III	144	
IV	464	Total: 1968

Total training hours attended by Water Operators in 2012 was 25,947 for an average of 13 hours training per operator

Water Operator Exams Given in 2012

Class	Total Given	Passed	% Passing
SS	69	42	61
I	90	55	61
II	80	37	46
III	32	11	34
IV	47	18	38

Certified Wastewater Operators as of December 31, 2012

Class	Number	
SS	314	
I	577	
II	306	
III	108	
IV	394	Total: 1699

Total training hours attended by Wastewater Operators in 2012 was 20,620 for an average of 12 hours training per operator

Wastewater Exams Given in 2012

Class	Total Given	Passed	% Passing
SS	40	32	80
I	81	67	83
II	46	29	63
III	33	11	33
IV	45	15	33

* The information in this table was provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Operator Certification Program, 1/28/2013