H2Oregon Spring 2024 Vol. 46, No. 2

46th Annual Management & Technical Conference Highlights SUNRIVER, OREGON

30th Annual Summer Classic Conference coming up AUGUST 19-22 SEASIDE, OREGON

A publication of Oregon Association of Water Utilities Read H₂Oregon online at www.oawu.net

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We are also seeking articles, clean jokes, Oregon trivia, letters and interesting stories.

Please send submissions (no more than two pages in length) to:

Oregon Association of Water Utilities

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OAWU's mission is to provide service, support and solutions for Oregon water & wastewater utilities to meet the challenges of today & tomorrow.



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Send your articles with full color photographs, in digital format if possible, to the address listed above.

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Association Growth

by Jason Green, Executive Director

The OAWU Board of Directors and Staff are excited to share with the Association Membership the conceptual plans below of the new OAWU Training Center. Twenty four years ago, the Association Board of Directors worked through and adopted the Association Long Range Plan that has guided us well for many areas. In that document were goals and plans to build a training center for the membership. Through the State Legislature and especially from support of the Oregon Water Caucus, we are excited to have received a \$1.6 million dollar grant that will make this long-range goal a reality. Currently, several of the Association staff have been involved in the old shop demolition; by mid-June we expect to have the old shop portion and its foundation/slab removed and site prepped for new construction to begin. We look forward to sharing this with you as we proceed. We hope to make this addition to the Association a great benefit to the membership for many years to come.

In addition to the training center, the Association also has added several new staff to the crew, increasing the total to 16 to better assist and serve the membership. We were also grateful recipients of one of the OHA-DWS Lead Service Line and the Small Water Operator Training (SWO) contracts, a grant program through Oregon to provide technical assistance and training targeting small water systems with 3,300 populations and less, and a new Oregon Apprenticeship two-year program. Thank you for your continued support! Wishing you a great and fruitful Summer! •





Oregon Association of Water Utilities



46TH ANNUAL Management & Technical Conference SUNRIVER, OREGON





This year's conference was a great success, and we were blessed with a week of beautiful, cold weather. Many of the attendees were able to catch up with old friends and make new ones within the industry. OAWU staff enjoyed serving the members of the Association and providing assistance to those in need. Sunriver staff again provided genuine, friendly, excellent service, and great food.

The conference sessions were led off by Jason Green, OAWU Executive Director, Matt Johnson, OAWU Board President, and Russ Cooper, OAWU NRWA Director. They welcomed attendees, discussed the state of the Association, and provided an update on the issues the industry is facing at a national level. This was followed by Mark Landauer who presented an update of legislative issues at the state level.

The OAWU annual business meeting was held after class sessions ended on Tuesday. President Matt Johnson presided over the meeting as attending members heard committee updates and participated in board member elections. The slate of board members who were submitted by the Nomination and Development Committee and re-elected to the board were:

- Russ Cooper, City of Monmouth, Region 3, expires 2027
- Mike Edwards, City of Bend Region 1, expires 2027
- Joel Gehrett, Deschutes Valley Water Dist., Region 3, expires 2027

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- Kriss Schneider, Schneider Equipment Inc., expires 2027
- Brad Jensen, City of Silverton, Region 3, expires 2027









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Oregon Association of Water Utilities



At Wednesday's regular board meeting, annual officer elections for 2024 occurred. They are: Matt Johnson as President, Micah Olson as Vice President, and Craig Smith as Secretary/Treasurer. We would like to thank and recognize them for their leadership and service to OAWU.

Many attendees were present at the awards banquet on Wednesday evening, and several visiting attendee families joined us. The roast and salmon were great, we had a magician for entertainment and many good conversations could be heard throughout the Great Hall.

The 2023 Manager and Operator award recipients are:

The Manager of the Year: Steve (Shorty) Rolston, Perrydale Domestic Water Association

The Wastewater Operator of the Year: James Clifton, City of Molalla

The Water Operator of the Year: Tyson Keene, City of Lebanon

The Associate Member of the Year: Owens Pump & Equipment

The Friend of Rural Water: Dave Schluckebier, Oregon Meter Repair

The Office Manager of the Year: CaitLinn Perry, Roats Water System

The Rookie of the Year: Savanna Martin, City of Dayville

The Rookie of the Year: Shad Bennett, City of Redmond

Congratulations to all of our award recipients. These awards recognize the dedication and commitment made by those who choose to serve the communities of Oregon every day. Don't forget, if you have an employee who you would like to nominate for next year's awards, submit the information to the OAWU office for consideration.

The Best Tasting Water award recipients this year were the City of Lebanon for Best Surface Water and Avion Water Company for Best Groundwater. The submissions are tested by 3 judges from the water community of Oregon, and they decide the best groundwater and surface water, then these winners go head-to-head for best overall water in Oregon. The 2024 winner of the Overall Best Water category is the City of Lebanon. Their water will be flown to Washington DC and submitted for judging in the Best Water in the Nation contest.

At the Exhibitors' Hospitality Night Thursday, there was good food and drink, many door prizes, raffles, and an auction. We wish to extend a special thank

















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you to all of those that took part in this year's auction. The money goes to support the Jeff Swanson Memorial Scholarship fund. The scholarship auction and raffle proceeds exceeded \$7,705. The selected candidates for this year's Jeff Swanson Memorial Scholarship of \$1,500 was: Shelby Goetz, whose father works for the City of Canby, Mia McFadden, whose father works for the City of Gearhart, and Daisy Woika, whose father works for the City of Seaside. The application for the 2024/25 academic year can be found on our website, please apply if you have a dependent that is currently attending or going to attend college.

Congratulations to our raffle winners. Raffled items were:

A Henry Big Boy Dlx Eng .357 Mag/3 for WaterPac, a Vaquero MAG 4.62" SS for the Jeff Swanson Memorial Fund, a Samsung 55" Q60C QLED Smart Tizen TV, and a Salt Mafia 1 offshore fishing trip for 2 that was donated by Oregon Meter Repair.

The winners of the ping pong, Cornhole and cribbage tournaments were announced. First place in ping pong was Darryl Walker, Wyatt Martin came in second, and Gideon Cornelius came in third. Dan Bruce came in first for cribbage, receiving the championship board. Jason Devine came in second and Chad McMurry came in third. Shad Bennett came in first for the Cornhole tournament, Lee McGinnis came in second, and Scott Heide came in third. Find the Logo contest winner was Allan Gebhard from the City of Redmond.

We wish to thank our Associate Members for their donations, time, and support of this conference and of course to the members who continue to believe in and support the Oregon Association of Water Utilities. Additionally, we would like to especially thank this year's Diamond sponsors: TAG and Ferguson Waterworks; our Gold Sponsor: Core & Main; our Silver Sponsors: HD Fowler Company, Inc. and Owens Pump and Equipment; and our Bronze Sponsors: PACE. Be sure to sign up for the Annual Conference next year, the first full week of March 2025, as there will be a slate of new classes to attend, people in our industry to visit, food to eat, and fun to enjoy. See you there! Best wishes to you, our friends. •



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Microplastics in Wastewater: A Looming Environmental Challenge

by Jason Coker, EPA Wastewater Technician

The rapid growth of industrialization, urbanization, and consumerism in recent decades has come with its share of environmental repercussions. One such concern that has risen to the forefront of environmental discourse is the issue of microplastics in wastewater. These tiny plastic particles, usually less than 5mm in size, have emerged as a potent threat to ecosystems and human health.

Origins of Microplastics in Wastewater

The introduction of microplastics into wastewater can be traced back to various sources. Personal care products, like exfoliating scrubs and toothpastes, once commonly contained microbeads, tiny spherical plastic particles. Similarly, the washing of synthetic textiles releases plastic fibers, which make their way into wastewater. Additionally, larger plastic debris break down over time due to mechanical and UV degradation, leading to the generation of secondary microplastics.

Impacts on Aquatic Life

Once these microplastics are flushed into the wastewater systems, they often find their way into rivers, lakes, and eventually the ocean. Aquatic organisms, from plankton to larger marine animals, mistake these particles for food. Consuming microplastics can lead to physical harm, reduced nutrient absorption, and exposure to the chemicals and pathogens that microplastics carry. Over time, these microplastics bioaccumulate and bio-magnify up the food chain, with potential repercussions for human consumers of seafood.

Implications for Human Health

Direct implications of microplastic consumption for human health are still under study. However, microplastics have the potential to carry toxic substances, either because of the chemicals they are made from or because they can absorb pollutants from the surrounding environment. When ingested, there's concern that these toxins could be released within the human body, leading to a variety of health issues.

Wastewater Treatment: A Partial Solution

Conventional wastewater treatment plants are not specifically designed to remove microplastics. While some particles get filtered out during the treatment processes, a significant portion still gets released into the environment. Advanced wastewater treatments, such as tertiary treatments using advanced filtration methods or membrane bioreactors, have shown more promise in removing microplastics. However, these solutions are not universally applied due to the associated higher costs.

The Way Forward

As laws and rules change wastewater systems may need to address microplastics this will require a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, there will be a need to innovate and upgrade wastewater treatment infrastructures to better capture and eliminate microplastics. On the other, at the source level, industries should be encouraged to reduce microplastic pollution, whether by reformulating products, improving product design, or through better waste management practices.

Microplastics in wastewater present a pressing environmental, treatment, and health challenge. While there are hurdles to overcome, with collaborative effort it should be possible to pave to meet the requirements if/when they come.

Operator Appreciation

by Hans Schroeder, Circuit Rider

It hit me after the last article printed that I missed giving credit where credit was due. The more that I thought about it, it made me aware of all the help we as operators provide to others in this industry. I wanted to make sure and recognize their assistance and sacrifice of their time to help me "dress up" my last article. Savanna Martin IS the Public Works Department for the city of Dayville. I've worked with her since she was hired about a year ago, assisting her in the operations of the system. Being brand new to the water/wastewater industry, Savanna has shown commitment, dedication, and passion for her new career. It has been exciting to watch her knowledge grow and expand in this industry. The "on the job" training has been a broad spectrum for her on both the water and wastewater side. She has learned that there is more to the job than just "keeping the park pretty." She has learned the process of sampling procedures, pump maintenance, proper chlorine residual readings, locating lines, pulling samples, and the list goes on. Her time management is a balancing act.

OAWU's Keith Bedell (Wastewater Tech) and myself have been available to assist Savannah in staying in compliance and meeting State/Federal deadlines. Keith has been able to assist Savannah with a recent on-site DEQ survey and discuss permit requirements with her. It truly has been a "team effort" giving the support and confidence to a new Operations Specialist to have the tools to succeed.

Savanna has shown her character by helping me with one of my articles, "New Faces." She was a perfect candidate to share with me the struggles a new operator faces, especially being the only field employee. Thank You - Savanna for the insight for the article and for calling on OAWU for assistance! •



🦇 WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS! ≪

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by Beth Myers, Water Lab

When customers complain about the water and don't feel they got an answer, they lose trust. So don't get defensive and just say "it's safe."

Start a conversation.....

Realize you – as a water system operator – know things about the water purveyance the customers don't. Talk to them while they are interested (angry qualifies as interested).

Use basic, easily understood language. Don't use big words or industry jargon.

Think about what you didn't know before working in water purveyance – that's a starting place.

Realize they may not know:

- \checkmark Why you say it is "safe" when they feel they are having a problem.
- ✓ Lots of different types of tests are being performed on a specific schedule with more being added all the time. Give them your FULL list. I have people come into the lab who live in Salem and don't know the city drinking water is even tested at all.
- ✓ What you mean when you say the water system's testing has not had "hits" on any of the tests (but what are "hits"?).
- ✓ There are minerals that are not regulated. (what is the difference between regulated minerals/chemicals and the rest of what is in the water?) Do YOU know?
- ✓ Why are PFAS not on the list? And what ARE PFAS I'm hearing about anyway?
- ✓ Why do you say my water is soft, but it leaves minerals where it dries?
- ✓ Some problems are "after meter" problems, but a lot are from the water being served. So, it does not help to reiterate "my line/your line" distinction over and over.

Truly listening to customers means understanding why the question of the water was brought up. What prompted it?

You need to know exactly WHAT the issue is to be able to answer. Then after you answer, ask them "did I answer your question?" If not, clarify what the question is again and start again.

Is the family experiencing stomach issues, has someone just been diagnosed with cancer, did they just move into town and are having odor, mineral buildup issues, did they move from an unchlorinated water source to a chlorinated source? Did they do a test on their fish tank water or pool and the results are different from what the water system show?

(Some kits measure in different units than mg/l...)

A brush off is never good PR, although a long history of EPA rules is not helpful either.

A trained operator is a treasure of knowledge. You have developed major skills to keep drinking water plants running and keep up with the new rules just keep pouring in.

People don't know water operators take dirty turbid water and turn it into clear water.

People don't realize water operators provide a barrier from dysentery, parasites such as Giardia, Hepatitis A, Cholera, Salmonella, and E.coli for them. They take this for granted, yet safe drinking water is what separates the developed countries from third world countries.

Help grow trust in your water system. Answer your customers in words they can understand so they feel they did get an answer. When they have an answer, they are able to move forward, if need be, to the next steps of resolution for their problem.

Need a little more specifics? Here's an example of getting to the heart of a customer complaint.

Water system has one well that has a slight hydrogen sulfide odor.

A customer calls and says they have a stinky odor at a tap.

So you (aka Sherlock Holmes) ask:

 \checkmark Have they noticed it at their neighbors' homes? No

- \checkmark Is it noticeable in all the taps, hot and cold? Just one tap
- \checkmark Where is that tap? The guest room bathroom
- \checkmark Where is that bathroom located in the house? On the 2nd floor.
- \checkmark Is it used often? No (you are on to it now....)
- ✓ Could it be the end of the home plumbing line? Probably, yes

Do you see the process I used? Get specific. That is where the answer usually lies.

All of you know that any type of odor/gas will go into the headspace of the water lines when the water sits unused. And of course, it goes to the highest point and the dead-end line. (at the guests' bathroom upstairs).

This customer needed to run the guest room tap more often or place a tap carbon filter unit on the tap/shower, wherever they noticed the odor. Problem solved because the exact issue bothering the customer was ferreted out. This is a mutual water system/customer problem.

The more they can see, the more they can save.



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by Heath Cokeley, Programs Manager/Circuit Rider

We all know that corrosion takes a heavy toll on infrastructure and our water and wastewater systems are no exception. What may surprise you though is how high that cost actually is. It's estimated that corrosion costs the US economy \$276 billion dollars each year.



That is not just the cost to our water and wastewater systems, that includes the cost across the board for all the different types of infrastructure we have come to rely on in our modern world. That means every year corrosion is costing each and every American about \$831 dollars. We are not seeing those costs; they are hidden in our taxes and utility bills.

So, with how much corrosion is costing us, what can be done about it? I would say the first step is to identify it. Early in my carrier, I remember finding a report for one of my water tanks that said during the interior inspection it was estimated to have a 97 percent lining failure. Unfortunately, while I was reading that report, it was 5 years after it had been written. The problem now became much worse. By the time we got the tank off-line so it could be sand blasted and recoated, parts of the rafters had rusted and broken off of the roof. The contractor doing the work figured it cost us about 4 times as much as it would have if things had been repaired shortly after the lining began to fail.

Water tanks obviously aren't the only parts of your system that could experience corrosion, but they are definitely one of the bigger assets so inspecting them routinely for lining failure is important. If any of your infrastructure has cathodic protection, checking those systems and making sure they are still in place and functioning will help save money in the long run as well. If you're seeing cracking or spalling in concrete that is an indication that the rebar inside is corroding. All these things are important to be aware of and looked at because it is so much easier to deal with if it is caught early. Don't be afraid either, if you do catch something and get it resolved before it becomes a bigger issue, point that out to your supervisor, board, or council. It's important that they recognize when you have saved them money and doing preventative maintenance is a great way to save money. Enjoy your corrosion inspections, or feel free to give a Circuit Rider or Wastewater Tech a call. We would be happy to help and with that I'll see you down the road. \blacklozenge

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

30th Annual Summer Classic Conference Seaside, Aug 19-22



Fall Operators Conference Seven Feathers, Canyonville October 1-2

Registration Information:



Annual End of Year Operators Conference Hood River, Dec. 9-12

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Is Your Well... Well?

by Sam Waller, Circuit Rider

Having access to clean and reliable water is essential for our daily lives. For those systems who rely on well water, it is crucial to be able to identify the signs of a failing well. There are various indicators that can help us determine if our well is going bad. By being vigilant and proactive, we can take the necessary steps to address any issues and ensure the continued supply of clean water for your customers.

1. Change in Water Quality:

One of the first signs of a failing well is a noticeable change in the quality of water. If you observe a sudden change in taste, odor, or color, it may indicate a problem. For instance, a metallic taste might suggest high levels of iron or other minerals.

2. Decreased Flow:

A significant drop in water flow can be a clear indication of a problem with your well. If you notice that your wells are not producing the same flow as before, it could be due to issues such as a blocked or damaged well pump, a clogged pipe, or a lowering water table.

3. Air or Sediment in Water:

The presence of air bubbles or sediment in your water is another red flag. Air bubbles could be a sign of a damaged well casing or a faulty pump, while sediment might indicate a problem with the well screen or the accumulation of debris in the well.

4. Unusual Sounds:

Pay attention to any unusual sounds coming from your well system. If you hear strange noises like grinding, rattling, or clicking, it may suggest mechanical issues with the well pump or motor. These sounds could also be an indication that the pump is struggling to draw water from the well.

5. Fluctuating Water Levels:

Monitoring the water levels in your well is crucial. If you notice a consistent decline in water levels, it may indicate a problem with the water table or a leak in the well casing. Conversely, an abnormally high-water level might suggest a blockage in the well or a faulty check valve.

6. Contaminated Surroundings:

Keep an eye out for any changes in the area surrounding your well. If you observe pooling water, sinkholes, or sudden vegetation growth, it could be a sign of a leaking well or a compromised casing. Additionally, the presence of bacteria, insects, or rodents near the well may indicate a potential contaminant source.

7. Increased Energy Consumption:

A failing well may cause your pump to work harder, leading to increased energy consumption. If you notice a significant spike in your electricity bill without any other explanation, it is worth investigating the possibility of a malfunctioning well system.

Recognizing the signs of a failing well is crucial for maintaining a safe and reliable water supply. By being attentive to changes in water quality, pressure, and appearance. As well as, monitoring for unusual sounds and surroundings, we can identify potential issues early on. Remember, regular maintenance and professional inspections are essential to ensure the longevity and functionality of our well.



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 The rehabilitation process begins with surface preparation, usually by means of pressure washing at 4,000-5,000 PSI.

2. After cleaning, active leaks are stopped, high strength restoration mortar is applied using a shot-crete nozzle or centrifugally using the Mainstay Mortar Spinner. 3. While the mortar is still soft, epoxy is applied. The simultaneous application of the mortar and epoxy results in a structural lining that is resistant to corrosion, with exceptional adhesion to the substrate even in damp environments.

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How are you Managing the Lead Service Inventory?

by Scott Berry, Operations Manager

There has been a lot of buzz at most of my stops about the Service Line Inventory lately, and for good reason. Most of you have probably started completing the inventory but for those that are having trouble beginning, the following information should help you get started. Most of the information used for this article comes straight from the OHA DWS website which I believe every operator responsible for collecting this data should review prior to starting.

Who has to complete the Inventory?

The service line inventory and annual update applies to **all Community (C) and Non-Transient Non-Community (NTNC) water systems.** Transient Non-Community (TNC) and Oregon Very Small (OVS) PWSs are not required to provide inventories.

What needs to be documented?

All services need to be documented. For the purposes of this this rule, a service line is everything between the mainline and the foundation of the home or business. There are 2 acceptable formats to use for completion of the Service Line Inventory: the Excel spreadsheets provided by OHA (be sure to use the template appropriate for your system classification) and the 120Water online portal that, when ready, will have a link on the OHA website.

What are the basic requirements for the service line inventory?

Public water systems must conduct an inventory of all service lines, on both the water system side and the homeowner side of the meter, and **submit the results to OHA– Drinking Water Services (DWS) by October 16, 2024.** Service line materials must, at a minimum, be classified as one of the following:

- Lead, where the service line is made of lead;
- Non-lead, where there is evidence to support this determination;
- Galvanized requiring replacement (GRR), where a galvanized service line is downstream of a current or former lead service line; or
- Lead status unknown, where there is no documentation or evidence to classify the material type.

What methodologies are acceptable to categorize service lines?

The following sources of information (methodologies) can be used for classification of service lines in the initial inventory.

- Records. All construction and plumbing codes, permits, and existing records and other documentation that indicate the service line materials used to connect structures to the distribution system such as distribution system maps and drawings, historical records on each service connection, and meter installation records.
- Installation date. Any piping installed after January 1, 1986, can be categorized as non-lead. If the water supplier has a documented construction standard established prior to that date that did not allow lead to be used for service lines, any service installed after that date can be categorized as non-lead.
- Service line size. Any service line with a diameter of 2 inches or greater can be categorized as non-lead.

- Customer data. The water supplier may choose to have customers submit documentation as to the lead status of their service line, from a location just inside their building. The water supplier must provide instructions to the building owner and must receive photo documentation clearly showing the service line material. If material cannot be visually confirmed, a scratch test on the pipe material can be performed and documented.
- Statistical analysis. If no lead service lines have been identified using the above methodologies (with customer supplied data being optional), a random sampling of a portion of the remaining unknown service lines that provides a 95% confidence level can be physically inspected. If no lead service lines are found in the randomized pool, all remaining unknown service lines can be categorized as non-lead. The statistical approach guidance document can be found here: www.oregon.gov/lcrr

Statistical analysis is allowed for community water systems only (CWS).

Do I have to identify the material type of every service line by October 16, 2024?

A system can use all available documentation to categorize service lines and consider those without documentation as lead status unknown in the initial inventory. However, unknowns must eventually be categorized. A public notice must be sent to customers of those service lines designated as lead, GRR, or unknown 30 days after inventory submission then annually after that or until the service line has been replaced or determined to be non-lead. The water system must supply filter pitchers to the customer if the service line is disturbed or in the event of a partial or full lead service line replacement.

There may be additional information posted in the form of EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Improvements soon so keep checking the OHA DWS website at: **www.oregon.gove/lcrr.**



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Water Shutoffs for Non-Payment to Limit Liability

by Laura A. Shroeder and Max Jones

The following article contributed by Schoeder Law Offices, P.C. predominately applies to privately owned water systems that are being required to meet PUC regulations, but the direction can be used by non PUC regulated systems as an example.

To operate efficiently, water delivery organizations require customer payment as a fee for service. Due to the societal importance of the crucial service they provide, collecting delinquent customer accounts is challenging. Disconnection cannot be the first course of action without creating substantial liability. This article will discuss the rules promulgated by the Oregon Public Utility Commission ("PUC") regarding delinquent customer accounts. Accordingly, it should be considered by unregulated utilities, quasi-municipal districts, and municipalities to aptly navigate delinquent accounts before disconnection.

Numerous grounds exist for involuntary disconnection from water services. Regardless of the reason, a water delivery organization should adopt a policy and procedure that provides notice before disconnecting. Under PUC rules, a water utility must provide two written notices in advance of disconnection: a 15-calendar and a 7-calendar day disconnection notice. The notices must either be hand-delivered in person to the customer or adult at the premises or sent by U.S. Mail. However, mailed notices are considered served two calendar days after being deposited in the U.S. Mail. The notices must include the utility's contact information, state the proposed disconnection date, provide grounds for disconnection, note how the customer may avoid disconnection; and provide the PUC's contact information for the customer to contact if they wish to dispute the grounds for disconnection.

Under PUC rules, if nonpayment is the grounds for disconnection, then the notice requirements are expanded. The PUC regulated water utility must provide the amount the customer must pay to avoid disconnection and state that if service is disconnected the utility will solely reconnect service after the customer reapplies for service and pays all applicable charges. Further, the notice must inform the residential customer regarding potential eligibility for a

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time-payment agreement. Plans must be offered to current residential customers with past-due amounts and customers whose service was voluntarily disconnected but reapplied within 20 days of disconnection. These plans must either be a levelized-pay arrearage plan, an equal-pay arrearage plan, or an alternate time-payment plan developed by the utility and agreed to by the delinquent customer. However, if the customer fails to abide by the time-payment plan this is grounds for disconnection with solely a 7-calendar day notice required.

The PUC approved rule revisions in 2022 may now only disconnect service between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. and must postpone disconnection should a temperature of less than 32 degrees is forecasted, a winter storm warning is in effect, the customer is under a wildfire evacuation notice, or when the air quality index is at or above 100. Further, qualifying low-income customers may have their late payment charges and deposits waived. These recent rule changes were not passed to remove the ability for utilities to



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terminate services but to ensure disconnection occurs when only absolutely necessary.

While these PUC rules are not binding on non-regulated water utilities, they provide a framework that if followed would be defensible in situations where a disconnected, non-paying customer brings a counter suit against the water delivery organization for damages related to disconnection.

Conclusion

Operating a water delivery organization is a challenge. Managing thin margins with delinquent customers compounds the difficulty. It is imperative that water delivery organizations legally and responsibly disconnect non-paying customers. At Schroeder Law Offices, P.C. we can assist water organizations in navigating the ever-multiplying laws that complicate their service delivery.

Please contact attorney Laura A. Shroeder or attorney Max Jones, the authors of this article by contacting us through our website, http://water-law.com





How do You Learn?

by Heather Davis, Apprenticeship Coordinator

Everybody is different, that is obvious, but it is something that we do not think about as often as we should. Especially when it comes to training someone. The reason for this, simply everyone learns differently.

Some people need to be shown how to do something a few times before they learn it, while others can learn it after being shown just one time. Then there are some people who have to be taught in-person, so they can ask questions and be shown what to do correctly in case they mess up. Others learn better from watching a video or reading instructions and taking it step by step by themselves.

So how do you learn best? This is something I wish I learned about myself a lot sooner in life. When I was in college, I started by going in-person to class. I will admit that for some classes, I needed to be in a classroom setting to interact with others to learn better. After about a year, there was a class I needed to take, and it was only available online. It was a history class, I loved it. I was able to work from home and take my time doing my homework without being interrupted and having distractions around me. So, I started to increase the classes I attended online and towards the end of my college days, I was full-time online. It was great, I loved it. I would wake up, have breakfast, and then do schoolwork for a few hours every morning. I always work better in the morning. I could review the training video as many times as I needed and take my time going over the material for the class. That last year, not only did I receive amazing grades, but I understood the material from my classes better than I ever had.

Why is this important to know about ourselves? Simple, because it is good for the person training you to know how you work best. Benjamin Frankline once said, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn." We need to know how we learn best to make sure that we are being trained the best way for us, to not just learn, but understand what is being taught.

Along with that, when training, ask the students how they learn best. This way we will be able to train someone to learn their new job better. Songwriter/music producer Phill Collins said, "In learning you will teach, and in teaching you will learn." Watch and learn yourself, do I need to change how I train someone? Not to just help them learn the new information, but also understand it.

Learn about yourself more and speak up to let your instructor know how you best learn. This can make life much easier and potentially make you a better employee.

YDO Your DEQ Online

by Keith Bedell, Wastewater Technician

Now that YDO is implemented and up and running, you can send an email with a question to YourDEQOnline@deq.state.or.us, or you can click on the "contact your DEQ Online Help Desk" icon which takes you to a form that allows you to ask a question and get a response back by email also. As operators we like to think that DEQ only does Wastewater and Stormwater, but as you can see by the diagram below there is a lot more to it and for them to have everything integrated into one online program takes a lot. If you go online to the website and click on any of the topics with a "+" sign, it will expand and show you all the different topics you can find for that particular category. Oversight and fixing the issues that crop up takes time. I admire the people with DEQ that get calls from operators trying to set up an account or trying to renew their certification, they have plenty to do, are always courteous, patient and understanding. So, the next time you have problems with the YDO and possibly give them a call, remember that you aren't the only one. Give yourself plenty of time to renew your certification, don't wait till the last minute. My certification expires December 31, 2024, and it showed that I can start the renewal process now with plenty of time to get my CEUs and training together before renewal. It does say they will start accepting applications no sooner than 3 months leading up to the expiration date (October for December 31st expiration). But you can have everything filled out, all of your documentation uploaded to their website waiting for renewal. If you happened to upgrade one of your certificates by taking the test through ABC/ WPI during your current 2-year period then you can use the OESAC # 4391 and that will count as 2.0 CEUs and congratulations on passing the test.

Air Quality

Asbestos Program (as of Aug 12, 2021)

• Gasoline Transporter Program (as of May 4, 2021)

Land Quality

• Hazardous Waste (as of Oct 7, 2021)

Water Quality

- 401 Certification (as of Oct 1, 2021)
- Industrial and Construction Stormwater (as of Oct 1, 2021)
- Sewage Disposal Service Business License (as of Dec 7, 2022)
- Underground Injection Control (as of Oct 1, 2021)
- Wastewater Operator Certification (as of Mar 14, 2023

Climate Protection Program

- Climate Protection Program (as of Sept 1, 2023)
- Greenhouse Gas Reporting and Thirdparty Verification (as of Nov 29, 2023

Agency-wide Services

• Pollution Complaints Program (as of Sept 27, 2023)

Coming in 2024

Land Quality

- Environmental Cleanup, Leaking Underground Storage Tanks, Heating Oil Tanks and Heating Oil Tanks Licensing (expected April 16, 2024)
- Solid Waste Permits
- Underground Storage Tanks

Water Quality

- NPDES and WPCF General Permit
- NPDES and WPCF Individual Permits
- WPCF Onsite Permits

Air Quality

- Air Contaminant Discharge Permits
- Area Source Registration
- Emissions Inventory Reporting
- Title V Permits.





Permits and Water Use Reporting

by Tim Tice, Projects Manager

The water use management practice in the State of Oregon uses water permits, certificates, and extensions of time to track and monitor the State's water, it is a very complex task to manage. Having worked with many of our members in developing Water Management and Conservation plans (WMCP), one area of focus is the applying water usage to a permit or certificate.

Oregon law requires all water be used for beneficial use without waste. It compares beneficial use to non-accounted-for water begins with an annual water use report. The water year begins October one, which necessitates those water operators assigned to make the reports to begin tallying up water pumped the previous twelve months. ORS 537.099 defines who must report their water use.

Reporting water use becomes a bit complex when applying water usage to a specific certificate and or permit. A permit, and or certificate will be issued that allows a specific amount of water to be pumped, a single permit for a single well.

If the single well produced ≈ 60 million gallons (MG annually), then the total gallonage is displayed down a single column associated with the single permit. An operator absolutely needs to know the total allowed water under the permit or certificate.

Under the permit or certificate, the total allowed water is measured in a unit. The total water pumped, once recorded, must be converted to the unit of measure on the permit and or certificate. This measurement shows what the permit allows versus the water pumped.

The 60 MG annually equates to 114 GPM or 0.25 CFS pumping water continuously 1,440 minutes each day. This is a significant point because measured water pumped may exceed the GPM or CFS, yet unlikely when calculated using the 1,440 minutes per day.

Complexity increases by having multiple sources of water (points of diversions) under a single permit. A single permit may state "sources of water" as wells A, B, C and D which requires a little more math. The most intricate set of water rights is multiple water rights with multiple sources of water.

In example only, the permits will not carry the numerical designation (G-99999), only a single letter. One PWS can be issued the following permits/certificates.

Permits	Sources	Max Rate
Permit A	Well One	100 GPM
Permit B	Well Two	0.50 CFS
Certificate 1	Well One Two Three	1.0 CFS (rotation)
Permit D	Carlyle Creek	0.67 CFS
Permit E	Well Four	0.50 CFS
Certificate 2	Four Wells	1.00 CFS

The information in the table is a real scenario. From the table, it is evident that, allocating the proper water production to its correct water permit/certificate can be complicated.

ng – Measuring Up

Less understood rules associated with water permitting are the authorized completion date and the development limitations. Operators, if unaware of these two aspects, should discuss with the decision makers the key points that may impact retaining permits. The completion date is a future date the public water system estimates to complete construction and deliver water to the full amount indicated on the permit. An operator needs to be aware of the completion date for two reasons, a) the necessary timeline to begin a permit extension of time, and b) if completion date has expired, technically no amount of pumped water should be applied to said permit.

Beneficial use is the use of water to its authorized purpose while being fully in compliance with all permit conditions.1 Development limitation are another figure which may or may not be on an original permit, which may have an adjusted allowance of water. An example would be Permit G-99999 was allotted 1.00 CFS of water on the permit. Most permit extension approvals for municipal and quasi-municipal permits will include a development limitation condition. For example, Permit G-99999, the new development limitation under the extension of time, could be 0.50 CFS. Personnel associated with completing water use reports must know this condition, track, and report water usage. The balance of water under development limitation is frozen until it can be proven that the additional water is necessitated. This lower allowance becomes the maximum amount of water an entity can pump for a particular permit.

The entity using a WMCP provides the justification for the State to approve additional water, from a formal request. This is substantiated by water use reports and a few other items that prove both current and projected needs for water. As the uncertainty of the future cannot guarantee the findings discovered in any WMCP, the PWS is encouraged to seek professional advice from consultants, engineering firms and or water rights legal counsel for guidance relating to water permitting, and certification. The best of everything in life! 1- Oregon Water Resources Department





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DATA..DATA..DATA

by Monty Norris, Wastewater Technician

How do you drive your plant? Have you been there forever and just do the minimum process tests to drive the plant and remember all the expected changes throughout the year? Do the entire staff understand the why or the why not to the changes that are being made? As much as we want to operate from plant knowledge and what we see, we also need to operate from data.

Know the plant parameters first! Surface loading rate, weir overflow rate, solids loading rate, detention time. These can be calculated for the plant and based on flow. We can understand what's happening and be prepared when high flows or low flows arrive. Create a spreadsheet for the entire staff to understand it and see that everything has limits. When an engineer designs a plant, these are the parameters they work with... yes, I know, I said engineer!

Next, know the process parameters. What if we cut our food to 500 calories or increased it to 5000 calories a day? Wouldn't it be difficult to be productive and provide a good days work. The same goes for biology and why we calculate our f/m. Know our MLSS, doing settleometers, calculating the SVI, and doing a micro all go a long way to understanding what is happening when things go awry. These can typically all come from the same sample, so why not do them and capture the data for trending, I mean do we use trending on our SCADA, so why not trend our process data.

In a nutshell we will be able to look at the settleometer and predict our f/m, svi and micro just by doing the settleometer, but take the extra few minutes and calculate everything else because: what if your supernate suddenly goes hazy, solids are floating after 20 minutes, or PH drops out and chlorine use goes up? What's changed and why? If you need help calculating these please reach out to us and we'll plan a visit. Don't stop learning!! OAWU – 1-503-837-1212.

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Debbie

by Mike Collier, Deputy Director/Source Water Specialist

Don't think the title of this article is about our office manager Debbie. It is about those Debbie Downers at your place of work. You know the ones I am talking about, when they enter the room, everything deflates. What was once boisterous can quickly turn quiet and uncomfortable with what seems like a dense negative fog having rolled in as people begin to scramble and leave to get to a location where they can have some peace of soul again.

I am not sure if these Debbie's realize that the attitude that they bring with them changes the dynamics of the team they join, that as they talk, many people begin to squirm to get away, looking at the clock, and trying to find a way out for some respite. In interactions with a new acquaintance, we may begin a conversation and feel some sympathy for the Debbie, but it often only takes a few moments to realize that they are really a Debbie, and it becomes a strain to maintain the pleasantries and continue in conversation.

I really am not sure if a Debbie can see this in themselves and don't know the struggle that they may go through to come out of a pessimistic view. I do know that it affects the entire work environment and becomes a struggle for others to befriend and be around them. It is worth taking a moment to look inwardly and consider how our own attitudes affect the working environment - are we making others uncomfortable, are we bringing in a fog, or are we making it a more enjoyable atmosphere for everyone? When work is uplifting and fun, the day typically goes faster and little problems that come up throughout the day don't seem to affect us as much.

I am no psychologist and do not know Debbie's struggle and am not trying to convey that it is their fault, it could be something that really should be looked at between them and a professional. I am sure the weight on the shoulders of a Debbie can feel unbearable, talking to someone about it is the first step to move the pendulum slightly toward a heathier perspective.

Also, a Debbie may not realize they are a Debbie, or they may be struggling with chronic pain, or have just gone through a hard time. It is important to realize these things when working with, talking to, or just being in the presence of a Debbie – hopefully we can all have a little more compassion for them and their situation. We can stick to them in conversation through the times that are uncomfortable even though we feel the drain. This may be just what they need to have a little more sun shining on their day.

UPCOMING TRAINING & EVENTS

Date	Class Title	Location	CEU Information	ESAC#, Fe	e/Free
April 2-3	Water Treatment, Water Distribution Certification Review	Keizer	1.4 Water/0.5 Wastewater/Onsit	e 5815	Fee
April 4	Water T/D Level 3,4 & Filtration Endorsement	Keizer	0.6 Water	5816	Fee
April 4	Distribution Basics	Roseburg	0.6 Water/Wastewater	5986	Fee
May 15	Distribution Basics	Turner	0.6 Water	5986	Fee
May 21-22	Water Treatment, Water Distribution Certification Review	Keizer	1.4 Water/0.5 Wastewater/Onsit	e 5815	Fee
May 23	Water T/D Level 3,4 & Filtration Endorsement	Keizer	0.6 Water	5816	Fee
May 23	Math for Operators	Redmond	0.4 Water/Wastewater	TBA	Fee
May 23	Pumps & Pumping	Redmond	0.3 Water/Wastewater/Onsite	TBA	Fee
June 25	Math for Operators	Hermiston	0.4 Water/Wastewater	TBA	Fee
June 25	Pumps and Pumping	Hermiston	0.3 Water/Wastewater/Onsite	TBA	Fee
July 23-24	Water Treatment, Water Distribution Certification Review	Redmond	1.4 Water/0.5 Wastewater/Onsit	e 5815	Fee
August 6-7	Wastewater Treatment/Collections Certification Review	Keizer	1.4 Wastewater/0.7 Water	6043	Fee
August 19-22	30th Annual Summer Classic Conference	Seaside	2.3 Water/Wastewater	TBA	Fee
September 25	Developing Your Operations & Maintenance Manual	Baker City	0.4 Water/Wastewater	5805	Fee
September 25	Leak Detection	Baker City	0.2 Water/Wastewater	TBA	Fee
October 1-2	2024 Fall Operators Conference	Canyonville	1.4 Water/Wastewater	TBA	Fee
November 5-7	Spirit Mountain Casino Operator's Conference – 2024	Grand Ronde	2.0 Water/Wastewater	TBA	Fee
November 13	Understanding the requirements of the WMCP	Salem	3.0 Water	TBA	Fee
November 13	Job Site Safety	Salem	3.0 Water/Wastewater/Onsite	4635	Fee
December 9-12	Annual End of Year Operator's Conference	Hood River	2.3 Water/Wastewater	TBA	Fee

Levels 1-4 Water Operator Exams

Trained and certified operators are necessary to ensure that the systems are managed in a manner that fully protects public health and the environment. The OARs for certification stipulate that the qualifying experience for applicants for certification as a water treatment plant operator must attain at least half the required operating experience at a public water purification plant that uses complex filtration technology and is not more than one classification lower than the level of certification they are seeking. In other words, if you have only worked for a Class 2 treatment plant, we allow you to apply for a Level 3 certification but not a Level 4 certification. If you move on to a Class 3 plant, then you must have ½ the qualifying experience (at the Level 3 plant) before allowing to apply for a Level 4 certification. Reciprocity from state to state ensures that the operator have the operating experience for which they are certified.

For additional information, please visit http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/OperatorCertification/Levels1-4/Pages/exams.aspx

Drinking Water Data Online Drinking Water Services https://yourwater.oregon.gov https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/HEALTHYENVIRONMENTS/DRINKINGWATER/Pages/index.aspx

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A Regular Member shall be any water or wastewater utility, public or private, engaged in the production, distribution or reclamation of water. A Regular Member shall have one vote. Annual Dues: See Regular Member Dues Schedule

Associate Member

An Associate Member shall be any organization, individual or corporation, supplying services or equipment to water and wastewater utilities. An Associate Member shall have one vote. Annual Dues \$600.00 per year

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An Individual Member shall be an individual involved in the water/wastewater industry or a user of such utilities. The membership is informational in nature and shall be non-voting.

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