
**Managing a Small Drinking
Water System:
A Short Course for Local Officials**

Module 7
Managing People

**Participant
Module**

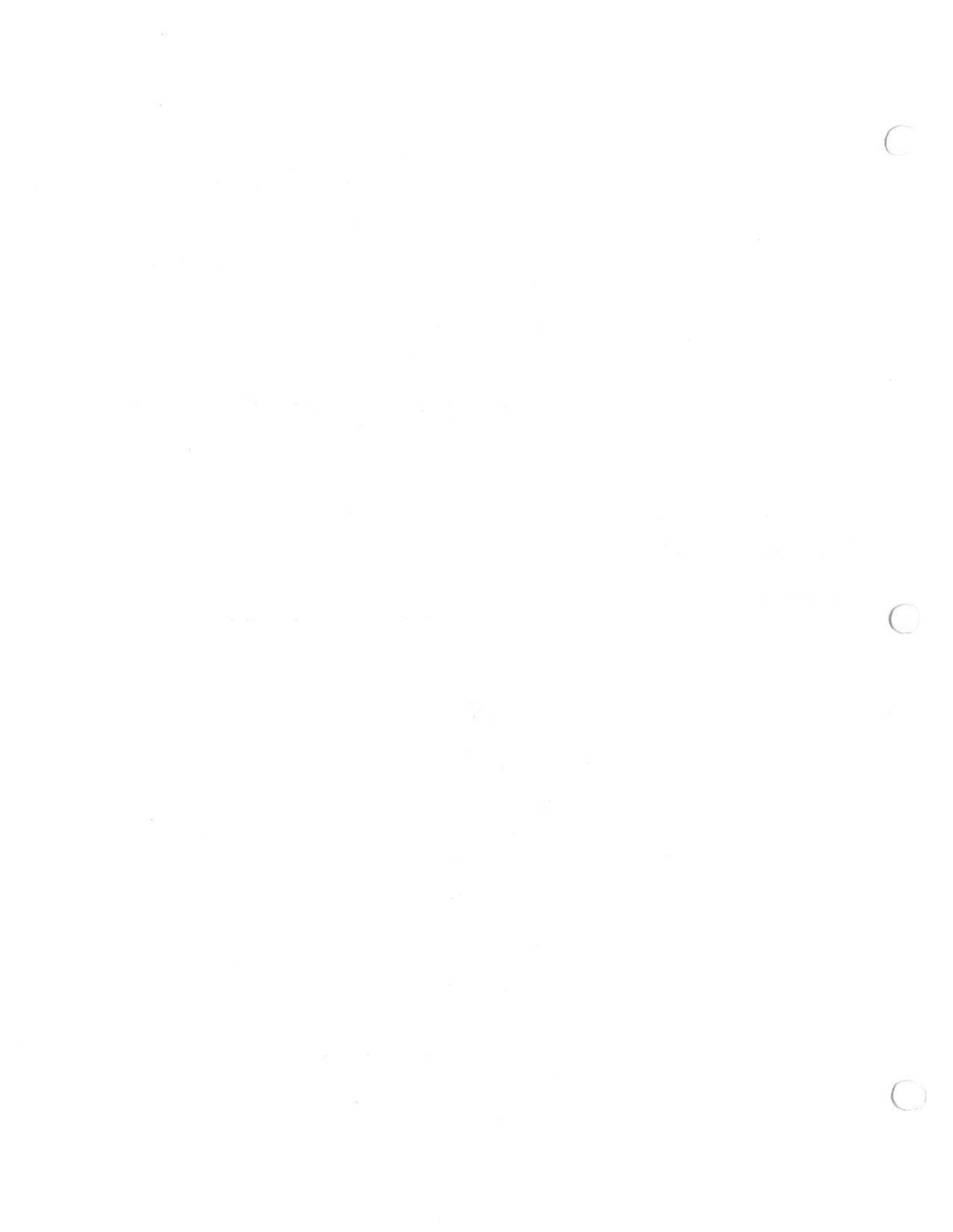


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The National Environmental Training Center for
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The Walkabout Co.
Training Consultants, Inc.

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The National Environmental Training Center for
Small Communities
West Virginia University
P.O. Box 6064
Morgantown, WV 26506-6064
(800) 624-8301
www.netc.wvu.edu





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Managing a Small Drinking Water System: A Short Course for Local Officials

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A Short Course for Local Officials**

***Module 7:
Managing People***

Curriculum Developers

**The National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities
The Walkabout Company
Training Consultants, Inc.**

Author

**Carol Limaye
Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission**

Charles Pycha
Environmental Engineer
Small Systems Specialist
Safe Drinking Water Branch
U.S. EPA, Region 5
Chicago, IL

Peter Shanaghan, P.E.
Team Leader
Drinking Water Utilities Team
Office of Groundwater and Drinking
Water
U.S. EPA
Washington, DC

Theresa Tuano
(former employee)
Office of Groundwater and Drinking
Water
U.S. EPA
Washington, DC

James Wheeler, P.E.
Acting Chief
Municipal Technology Branch
Office of Wastewater Management
U.S. EPA
Washington, DC

Other Contributors

William C. Bliss
Chairman, Wabedo Township
Director, Minnesota Assoc. of
Townships
Longville, MN

Sarah E. Bradford
Manager
Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund
Program
Louisiana Dept. of Health and Hospitals
Baton Rouge, LA

Bridget Chard
Small Communities Project Coordinator
Brainerd, MN

James Davenport
Research Associate
National Association of Counties
Washington, DC

Harriet Emerson, MSJ
Publications Supervisor

Environmental Services and
Training Division
Morgantown, WV
Jean S. Holloway
Training Manager
Environmental Finance Center,
U.S. EPA Region 3
Newark, MD

Bill Jarocki Director
Environmental Finance Center, U.S.
EPA Region 10
Boise, ID

Lynda Kersey
Training Specialist (former)
NETCSC
Morgantown, WV

Steve Krchnavy
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Rural Water Assoc.
Bellefonte, PA

Eric Merrill
Senior Graphic Designer
Environmental Services and
Training Division
Morgantown, WV

Jennifer Meyer
Auditor, Capacity Development
Section
Drinking Water Revolving Loan
Fund Program
Louisiana Dept. of Health and
Hospitals
Baton Rouge, LA

Amisha Pardasani
Graduate Research Assistant
NETCSC
Morgantown, WV

Daniel Parker
Environmental Resources Specialist
State of West Virginia
Bureau for Public Health
Charleston, WV

Larry A. Parker, P.E., CEI, CET
Larry A. Parker & Associates, Inc.
St. Marys, WV

Tommy Ricks
Development/Management Specialist
Community Resource Group, Inc.-
RCAP
Crystal Springs, MS

Judith A. Sass
Rural Development Specialist
Midwest Assistance Program, Inc.
New Prague, MN

Sanjay Saxena
Program Coordinator
Nat'l. Drinking Water Clearinghouse
Morgantown, WV

Bill Seigel
Director, Community
Development Program
SEDA Council of Governments
Lewisburg, PA

John Thom
Minnesota Section, American Water
Works Association
Utility Coordinator, City of Richfield
Richfield, MN

Stew Thornley
Education Committee
Section Education Chair
Minnesota Section, American
WaterWorks Association
St. Paul, MN

Chain-Wen Wang
Training Specialist (former)
NETCSC
Morgantown, WV

Wayne Weikel
Southeast Rural Community
Assistance Corporation
Leesburg, VA

Andrea Williams
Southeast Rural Community
Assistance Corporation
Leesburg, VA
Larry Rader
West Virginia Rural Water Assoc.
(former employee)
Technical Representative, KJELL
Corp. Beverly, WV

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Introduction to the Training Curriculum

Managing a Small Drinking Water System: A Short Course for Local Officials

The training curriculum, *Managing a Small Drinking Water System: A Short Course for Local Officials*, is an introductory level course. It is designed to help local officials in small communities implement management practices that will improve their ability to provide safe drinking water in accordance with the reauthorized Safe Drinking Water Act. Local officials include mayors, city council members, water/utility board members, town or city administrative personnel, and other decision makers who oversee or administer the community's drinking water system.

The modules in this series focus on specific aspects of drinking water system management related to developing or enhancing technical, managerial, and financial capacity. The modules can be used with a trainer in small groups or for self-study. If used for self-study, go through the modules at your own pace and direct any questions you might have to officials or experts in your area.

The information presented in *Managing a Small Drinking Water System: A Short Course for Local Officials* in no way replaces local, state, or federal guidelines or operating procedures. Please refer to specific safety, operational, or regulatory information sources in your state.

Series Modules

1. Local Official's Responsibilities for Providing Safe Drinking Water
2. Regulatory History, Current and Future Requirements
3. Basics of a Drinking Water System (video)
4. Drinking Water System Operation and Maintenance (video)
5. Administrative Management Practices
6. Working with Consultants and Assistance Providers
7. Managing People
8. Communicating with the Public
9. Financial Management
10. Financial Options for System Projects or Upgrades

Learning Objectives

Module 7: Managing People

After studying Module 7, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify the benefits of hiring, training, assessing, and retaining good staff members.
2. Describe the key criteria for hiring a drinking water operator and management staff.
3. Synthesize the operator's role for maintaining system compliance and safe drinking water.
3. Identify the key factors and benefits of employee job descriptions and performance assessments.
5. List effective personnel management strategies.
6. List and describe management issues which ensure protection and fairness to all employees.

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Module 7:

Managing People

Little, if anything, is as important to a community as its water supply. An adequate supply of safe drinking water ensures public health and economic development. Safe drinking water is the result of the overall "capacity" of your drinking water system. Capacity means having the adequate technical infrastructure, financial resources, and management structure in place so that you can provide your community with a consistent, reliable, and affordable supply of safe drinking water, and comply with applicable regulations. Together these factors create a workable formula for the health and growth of your community.

As a local official, you assumed responsibility to your community when you took your Oath of Office. This responsibility included a promise to assist in making decisions that influence the quality of life of your family, neighbors, and others who live, work, or pass through your town. Whether or not you have specific responsibility for your drinking water system, you are part of a team that does. As an official as well as an informed member of your community, the more you know about drinking water systems, the better decisions you will make.

Introduction

Good policies and excellent resolutions will help your water system provide safe water at reasonable rates. The system must have capable employees who can implement management's stated intentions. Local officials depend upon the water system's staff to fulfill the water system's mission. A water system staffed by an ineffective workforce generally has little capability to adequately serve the community. The true test of managerial capacity is the community's ability to hire, train, and retain good staff. These employees are the types who participate in the management's vision and are able to make daily decisions in support of that vision. Even if your system decides to hire an outside operating and management company to operate the water system and manage its staff, you need to know the basics of managing personnel.

Staffing and Organization

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a basic question in determining managerial capacity is, "Is the system properly organized and staffed?" To have a productive water system, local officials should base staffing on the water system's needs, which include consumer needs. If you skimp on staff because you do not offer competitive salaries and benefits, you are using a false economy. The costs of employee turnover and noncompliance far outweigh the monetary costs of properly staffing the water system.

Essential Qualities of an Operator

- Up-to-date certification(s)
- Knowledge of current drinking water standards
- Genuine concern for providing 'safe drinking water
- Personnel management skills
- Knowledge of entire water system

There is no optimal staffing level for a certain size of system. The number of employees depends upon various factors:

- Age and complexity of the water system
- Maintenance needs
- Length of lines
- Geological features
- Extent of automation and growth trends
- Use of outside services and planned construction projects.

Small systems, at a minimum, need a certified operator and at least one back-up person. Beyond that, the system needs to have at least one office person. This employee answers the phone, prepares bills, receives collections, and takes care of records and correspondence. Additional employees will be required as the water system becomes larger or more complex.

The Operator

Your system's operator is the key to delivering safe water. While management is responsible for any noncompliance, the operator controls the everyday operations and how well the system meets drinking water standards. Local officials should trust the operator to make good decisions about the quality of drinking water delivered to customers. The operator must be properly trained and certified to do that job.

As a local official, you should determine the minimum number of operators, and the certification levels required, for your water system. For instance, a surface water plant may need several operators of certain grade levels to remain in compliance with state drinking water standards. On the other hand, a small groundwater system may need only one full-time operator. Compliance requires that many small systems hire a part-time operator who also works for other water systems in the area. However, you must recognize that with this approach, the operator may not be available for all emergencies. Another person may need to become certified as a back-up operator. Note that some states require the presence of a certified operator when the system is operating. Find your state requirements.

According to the most recent EPA federal regulations for operator certification (1996 Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments), "All operating personnel making process control/system integrity decisions about water quality or quantity that affect public health need to be certified." EPA also requires that a designated certified operator be available for each operating shift. This does not mean that a certified operator must be on site at all times. The EPA guidelines describe "available" as follows: "Based on system size, complexity, and source water quality, a certified operator must be on site or able to be contacted as needed to initiate the appropriate action in a timely manner." Each state has the discretion of interpreting the definition of the term "available." Some states allow a certified operator to work for multiple systems.

The new EPA guidelines also require each state to establish training requirements. Certification renewal, which includes obtaining training or continuing education units (CEUs), must be on a fixed cycle not to exceed three years. To be eligible for certification, all operators must possess a high school diploma or equivalent. Some states may allow operators to substitute relevant training or experience for the diploma requirement.

When hiring a full-time or part-time operator, local officials should check with the state certifying agency for water system operators.

The certification status, experience, and training history of water operators often is public information. You may ask the state agency about confirmed complaints or actions against the operator. You may also contact an applicant's references.

Some important characteristics of a good operator are a true concern for public health and pride in running an efficient water system. While job performance can be corrected with the proper guidance, this basic attitude cannot. If local officials and the operator are working toward the same goals, the system's daily operations to fulfill customer demands should run more smoothly.

An operator must also have good management skills to handle a variety of situations. The operator is often the "ambassador" of the water system, so he or she must have excellent people skills. The operator should know every component of the water system since he or she is responsible for keeping it running on a day-to-day basis. A lack of knowledge of the entire water system could result in an outage if any part breaks down.

The Office Staff

Even a small system needs someone to answer phones and manage paperwork. While the operator can do this, it is better if another person is hired to perform this work. In the case of an outage, for instance, the operator should not be answering phone complaints but should be in the field fixing the problem.

The basic role of office staff is to be available to customers, manage customer accounts, and serve as the link between customers and the operator. The office staff typically performs the following duties:

- Prepare bills from water meter readings,
- Determine when a meter needs to be reread due to abnormal water use or a complaint,
- Answer questions about individual accounts and bills,
- Receive and deposit collections,
- Maintain customer account records,
- Maintain general financial records,
- Prepare materials for review by the board,
- Ensure meetings are posted according to state "Sunshine Laws,"

- Take complaint calls and dispatch the operator as needed,
- Coordinate communications between the operator and the office,
- Maintain operating and maintenance records in coordination with the operator,
- Process inquiries about new accounts, and
- Send proper reports to state regulatory agencies.

The most important quality of the person(s) hired to answer the phone is providing good customer service. Providing good customer service requires maturity and patience to withstand the customers' complaints. The public's perception of the water system is affected by the demeanor of the staff person on the phone.

Another essential skill of an office staff person is good organization. This ensures that bills are calculated accurately and mailed on time, and that collections are credited to the correct accounts. Good organization also means that records are maintained on the activities of the system. The effective office staff person must know how to manage records and produce them upon request.

Internal Control

Internal control refers to the routine processes and procedures set up to prevent or detect errors in the billing and accounting system. Errors may be unintentional, but should be detected in the normal course of business. An independent auditor cannot provide the only means of internal control. However, the auditor is a good source for assessing how well internal controls work in your system.

An effective method of internal control is segregation of duties. In many cases, a small system may not have enough employees to divide the office workload into separate duties. However, tasks and procedures can be organized to provide for some basic control over resources. Employees are protected if internal controls are built into the system, especially if resources are found missing. For example, it is not wise to keep cash in the office except for petty cash. Another basic control procedure is to assign one person to reconcile the bank statements and another to make deposits.

The Hiring Process

The “80/20 Rule” applies here. Hiring the right person is 80 percent of the task of managing that person. During the hiring process, you have two main objectives: 1) hire the person who best matches the job needs and fits your system, and 2) stay within the bounds of state and federal discrimination laws to ensure a fair process.

Preparing to Hire

The hiring process starts long before the first interview. To make sure the process is fair, you should prepare:

- Documentation including descriptions of the position and how it will be advertised, procedures for accepting applications, and screening candidates’ qualifications. The qualifications profile should state the basics: minimum education level; physical demands; specific vocational preparation, such as certification; and job knowledge required. Advertise the job according to local, state, and federal guidelines.
- A detailed job description of all duties and tasks to be performed on a routine basis. The description may include an open-ended section for non-routine tasks. The job description often becomes the basis for the regular job performance evaluation. (See sample job description on p.24 at the end of the module.)
- The application form should provide space for applicant information including education level, work experience, references, reasons for leaving previous jobs, and any special training or equipment used. An important part of this form is the certification section. This is where -the applicant swears to the accuracy of the information and agrees to certain conditions upon employment.
- A list of interview questions. Ask each candidate who is interviewed the same questions and note responses. More interviewing information follows below.

This paperwork and documentation is necessary since your system is small and local. Because any organization is vulnerable to law suits over the hiring process, these documents will help ensure fairness in hiring the appropriate and most qualified candidate(s).

The board of directors or city council can designate one person or a committee to screen applicants on the basis of the qualifications profile. First, develop a list of qualified applicants. Then decide in advance how many candidates to interview. Most personnel manuals recommend interviewing a minimum of three people if you have that many applications. Second, document the screening process. One method is to use a point system linked to the job qualifications. Score the applications accordingly. In addition to the above suggestions, you may want to contact your neighboring city or community's drinking water manager to help with the interview preparations and process.

The Interview Process

Since the person hired will be important to your organization, the interview process is well worth the effort. Local officials should schedule at least two interviews with each leading candidate. The first interview can be conducted by the designated individual or selection committee, the other interview can be scheduled with the full board. Both sessions should use a prepared list of questions. This avoids discriminatory practices.



The key to a fair interview is to make sure that all questions are job-related. Make all job requirements clear. Ask if the candidate will / be able to meet the job requirements with or Job Description without reasonable accommodation. Never assume that an applicant cannot meet the needs of a job based on age, family status, religion, gender, disability, or nationality. If a candidate provides information in these areas, this background should not be used for or against the candidate. The interview may consist of open-ended questions, but must remain job-related at all times. Try not to ask questions that require a simple yes or no. Some of the best questions include behavioral examples. Ask the candidates questions about how they respond to situations that have occurred in the past and how they may respond to critical events in the future. These behavioral examples can be based on actual situations the employee will encounter on the job. Past behavior is a good indicator of future behavior.

During the interview, you can talk about the local water system and its mission, values, and environment. But do not mislead the candidate as to the prospect for future job growth. Remember the candidate is considering whether to accept your offer of employment. By misleading job applicants in any way, a local official can expose the system to a lawsuit or poor employee relations. Avoid making statements that may be construed as a contract for employment.

After all interviews are complete, review your notes and share your observations with others who conducted the interviews. In the end, one or two candidates will stand out as most qualified for the job. These candidates can be interviewed later by the full board or city council. The second interview should also be conducted with a prepared list of questions. The questions may be different than the first interview and include board members' suggestions.

Topics to Cover During an Interview

- Certifications
- Training
- Past work experiences
- Scenario regarding personnel management
- Emergency behavioral examples
- Past experiences working with local officials
- Experience with the public

Evaluating and Selecting Applicants

If more than one person is being considered, the governing board's members can rank candidates by their qualifications. The person with the highest ranking would be considered further.

A necessary step in the selection process is to check applicants' references. The reference checks should verify the information stated on the application. It is not wise to accept references from an applicants' friends or relatives unless they have observed the applicant performing the job. Previous employers may also have policies prohibiting the release of any information except for position title, dates of employment, salary, and eligibility for re-hire. In this case, accept the reference, and document that information. In making a reference check, do not say or imply that the applicant has been selected for hire. You may only state that the applicant is being considered for the job.

Requiring applicants to undergo any type of test before employment is a tricky issue. A small water system may want to forgo testing. Tests can require a lot of paperwork and may expose the organization to a lawsuit. If testing is done, make sure the tests are consistently applied to each applicant and that the criteria for passing is stated in the hiring procedures. You may want to hire a consultant to create an

objective testing program that uses valid and reliable tests that can stand up in court. Note that the Drug-free Workplace Act allows testing for certain categories of drugs. To test for drugs, your community must have policies, labs, signed releases, and other legal documents in place. The Americans with Disabilities Act also allows some tests and medical exams. These may be given to all employees in the same job category *only* if the tests and exams are job-related.

Local boards may want to adopt a policy that provides a three to six month “probationary” or “qualification” period for a new employee. This policy must be clearly explained to the new employee. During the probationary period, the employer may terminate the employee’s status, with or without cause. This usually involves a written evaluation given to the employee before granting full employment status. Check state laws regarding use of a probationary period in the hiring process. This option is not available in all states.

Staffing Issues Unique to Small Communities

Avoid managing by committee. An employee with more than one supervisor is in a difficult position. Instructions and priorities may come into conflict. One boss may be pleased, another displeased with the worker. Multiple orders from more than one direct supervisor can lead to abuse. This may occur if no one knows what the staff member is doing for another boss. To avoid this situation, designate one board member to supervise one or more staff, and to act as a link between the staff and the full board. This board member should be accessible to staff. To avoid misunderstandings, the designated board member should be the only person to give instructions to staff.

**“Give as much
consideration to your
EMPLOYEES
as you do to your
CUSTOMERS.”**

By using this procedure, employees are accountable to that one board member, and that board member is accountable to the entire board for the staff's performance. Board members as a group can request information from an employee on an individual basis. As a board member or local official, you have an inherent right to keep up with the routine water system operations. Local officials or board members are legally responsible for system operations, but concerns or suggestions about staff performance should go through the designated procedure.

To protect the system's staff from politics, all job specifications and duties should be reasonable, consistently applied, and written as policies. The staff must adhere to those policies.

When a change occurs in management, such as the election of a new board, change the policies first before taking actions with employees. This is fair to employees and to the integrity of the water system. It is a good defense in the event of a lawsuit.

A water system's staff members are professionals who have jobs to do. While elected local officials or board members may be subject to the voter's 'wishes, staff should be allowed to do their jobs regardless of politics. Jobs should be structured so that job performance does not depend on political affiliations. The job criteria should be based on work performance, rather than the individual doing the job. Obviously, a newly elected official or board member may change the system's priorities, and the system staff must be responsive to the changes.

Avoid high employee turnover. A small water system does not have the same financial resources and employee benefit packages that a larger system has. Because of this basic fact, you, as a local official, may have to accept a certain level of

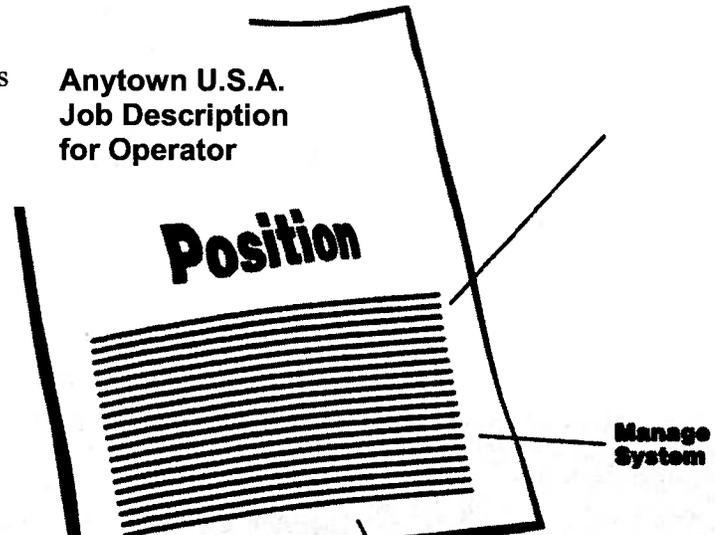
employee turnover. This may be a disadvantage of operating a small system.

Potential Employee Benefits

- **Competitive salary**
- **Health insurance**
- **Flexible working hours**
- **401k retirement plan**
- **Periodic cash bonus**
- **Vacation**
- **Earned sick leave**
- **Onsite daycare services**

Prepare in advance to minimize turnover. A small water system's board members usually know the employees and recognize their motivations for job performance.

Not all individuals are motivated by high salaries. While you should try to provide competitive salaries and benefits, you can also find other reasons to encourage employees to stay. Employees may like flexible hours or a periodic bonus. Find out what motivates each individual. This alone is a sign that you value the employee. Note also that many small systems can take advantage of benefit packages offered by the state's municipal league, rural water association, and other organizations.



Working with the Operator

Do not micro-manage. The operator is responsible for running the water system and knowing its customers. Local officials are free to ask reasonable questions, but they should trust the operator to make day-to-day decisions. Officials make policies to ensure safe drinking water for their community and should respect the operator's authority in carrying these policies out. In some small water systems, officials do help the operator on a voluntary basis. In this situation, these individuals serve as employees and should respect the operator's authority.

Safety Policies

Operating a water system can expose an employee to unsafe working conditions and chemicals. These add risks to the job. As a local official, it is your responsibility to reduce the risks. Consider these safety prevention steps:

- Develop a written safety policy. Have employees sign a form stating that they have received and read a copy.
- Ensure that all employees are trained, and periodically retrained, in safe work procedures.

- Provide a safe workplace. Consult with your insurance carrier about possible risks and how to minimize those risks.
- Implement and enforce all safety policies.
- Investigate all accidents and injuries to determine the cause.
- Ensure the proper maintenance of equipment and tools to meet safety standards.

The operator also is responsible for safety on the job. This may include following the safety policy and procedures: using protective devices and safety equipment; using care when operating equipment or working around hazardous materials; reporting any

Suggested Safety Policies

- All injuries should be reported immediately to a supervisor
- Chemicals should be used only to specifications
- Do not block exits with equipment
- Wear safety goggles in work areas
- Do not wear loose clothing while operating machinery
- Follow required Hazard Communication procedures

detected hazard, accident, or “near-miss” situations; and reporting any defective equipment or unsafe conditions. Potentially hazardous situations need to be reported, and the board should consider adopting procedures or precautions to avoid an accident or lawsuit.

Local officials may want to appoint a safety supervisor or safety committee to address job safety issues. The safety supervisor is responsible for following up on accident reports or reports of unsafe conditions. The aim is to reduce the risk in the workplace. The Safety Supervisor may recommend safety policies, procedures, and equipment to maintain a safe work environment.

Operator Training

Operator training is required for certification. It also protects the public’s investment in the water system. The operator’s level of knowledge and awareness will directly influence plant maintenance and determine if the water system is distributing safe water. Training prepares the operator to do the job and enables the operator to:

- Find out about changes in regulations for compliance;
- Identify system changes that will affect the water system;
- Learn about plant and distribution system maintenance; and
- Maintain or improve certification, thus assuring the board and the public that the operator knows the basics of public health protection and water system operations.

Self-study materials are available in most states to help an operator prepare for the certification test. The board should set aside funds so the operator can travel to utility schools, conferences, or regional meetings. These events give the operator an opportunity to network with other operators and suppliers to discuss water systems, problems, technological changes, and upgrades.

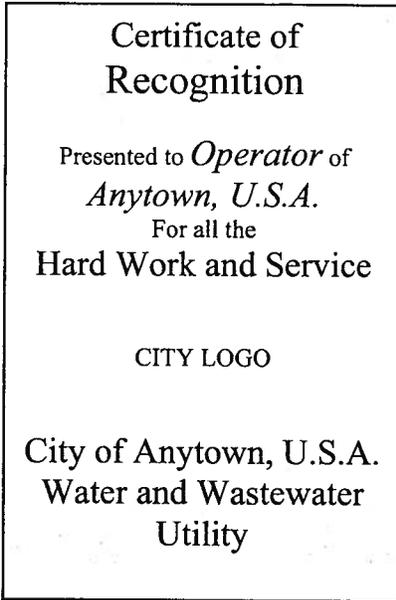
Local officials and board members must recognize that the operator is required to receive a minimum level of training. State or local regulations should be followed regarding suspension of the operator for failure to obtain the proper level of training. The operator should have access to other types of training, such as customer service and personnel management in some water systems, employees improve their job skills by training each other on the job or sharing training materials. Many systems have a certified operator and an operator, in-training.

Operator's Internal Reporting Procedures

Local officials should require the operator to submit written reports regarding the status of the water system. The reports should describe the system's key operating characteristics, including:

- Total number of customers/number of new customers,
- Total amount of water produced,
- Total water billed to customers,
- Percent of unaccounted-for water,
- Revenue and expenses for report period,
- Revenue and budget comparisons,
- Explanation of budget overruns,
- Number of meter re-reads,
- Number/types of customer complaints,
- Number of service terminations,
- Aged accounts receivable, and
- Significant drops in water pressure, or other operating emergencies.

The report should also include recommendations for new equipment, parts, special orders, operating policies, or other matters. These can then be taken up by officials and board members.



Certificate of Recognition

As a professional, the operator has a responsibility to maintain public safety. At the risk of losing certification, this responsibility exists in spite of any contradictory instructions from the board or a lack of resources. An operator without sufficient resources to comply with drinking water standards should resign rather than endanger the public. Compliance is solely the responsibility of local officials and board members. The operator should not be put in the position of violating federal and state standards because of others' failure to allocate the necessary resources.

Operator Recognition

Customers are usually not aware of how much they depend upon the operator to protect them from cross connections, contamination, outages, and illnesses. Local officials should routinely make this known to the community and customers. This is a low-cost way of recognizing the operator's concern for the public's welfare. A job that requires repairing lines in the middle of the night may deserve special appreciation. Other achievements to recognize are certifications, completion of study courses, or years of service. The recognition can be a plaque, certificate, or other award. Become creative with employee recognition.

Working with Employees: The Essentials

Every water system employee should have a detailed job description. Having detailed job descriptions for all employees lets the manager/operator and the employee know exactly the major responsibilities of the job position. This is like a contract with the employee.

Assessing Job Performance

There are many ways to assess job performance. These include an employee's self-assessment; co-worker's rating of an employee's work, or the use of established criteria, such as the number of resolved customer complaints. Performance assessment must be job-related and usually is scheduled at least once a year. The process should include a written document that lists each job task and allows a rating of how the employee did the job. The form should have spaces for "employee strengths" and "areas for improvement," a list of any special training or other requirements, space for the employee's signature, and other comments. The job performance assessment should be approved and signed by the employee, the supervisor, and one management team member above the level of supervisor. The latter may be the full board for a small water system. (See the "Sample Job Performance Assessment" on p. 23 of this module.)

After completing the written assessment and providing it to the employee, the supervisor or designated board member should do a personal interview with the employee. This interview may identify training accomplishments and training needs and discuss both positive and negative job conditions. Some negative issues may be the result of misunderstandings, and the discussion can serve to clear the air. Other topics may focus on the employee's career goals and compensation issues.

Management Training

Management training should be made available to all employees, especially to officials, board members, and owners. Managing a staff is difficult. It is more difficult if there is a personnel problem or a lack of trust. Employees appreciate managers who are fair, good role models, and effective communicators. Managers can learn good skills and techniques for managing people through special training, either informal or formal.

More information about "managing people" is available in books and personnel manuals. Management training classes are available through self-study and local community colleges and universities. Take advantage of these classes and study materials. A few states offer training for board members. Refer to your state for more information about whether this type of training is offered.

Management Skills

Drinking water system management skills can fall into three categories: leadership, communication, and self-management. The specific aspects of each follow:

Leadership

- *Feedback*: Provide timely, accurate, and unbiased information to workers about their performance.
- *Coaching*: Give on-the-job remedial or corrective training to individuals or small groups of workers within a planned program.

Communication

- *Person-to-person*: Use ordinary informal speech and listening techniques with a single individual to exchange ideas and information.
- *Group communication*: Use speech and mediated aids to exchange ideas and information with a number of people at the same time.
- *Written communication*: Record a message in a somewhat formal and structured manner to influence action or to serve as a record.

Self-Management

- *Priority setting*: Decide what should be done, then what should be done first, second, etc.
- *Delegating*: Amplify your efforts by systematically delegating selected portions of your supervisory work and authority to qualified individuals.
- *Time management*: Get the most of every hour spent on the job so that important tasks and activities are accomplished.

- *Managing by Standards:* Follow the accepted or written water system standards for the performance of work and relationships with others.
- *Self-development:* Improve your supervisory skills and knowledge to produce better results on the job.

Common Workplace Issues

Employers must be aware of workplace issues they may encounter, and their responsibilities for dealing with these problems. A few of the issues are discussed below.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and can lead to a lawsuit. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual behavior that is offensive or creates a hostile work environment and interferes with an employee's work performance. The best prevention is to:

- Deal with the issue in advance. Adopt a policy forbidding any physical or verbal behavior of a sexual nature, and sexually explicit pictures, signs, or objects in the work place. The policy should establish and explain complaint or grievance procedures, and identify the possible actions to be taken. Give all employees a copy of the policy.
- Respond to all complaints immediately. Thoroughly investigate the complaint by adhering to the policy. Don't assume hidden agendas in the investigation. If the complaint is substantiated, take corrective action. Discuss this with the employee to avoid repetition of the situation.
- Document, document, document. Write down every aspect of the investigation. Get written statements. If possible, at least two other persons should be present whenever you talk to the complainant or possible offender.
- Talk to an attorney if possible. Sexual harassment is serious. A complaint can negatively affect the integrity

Town settles sexual harassment case

The Water News

ANYTOWN, USA—At a federal court hearing Monday, attorneys for Anytown's Water District and plaintiffs in the sexual harassment case agreed on a settlement to an 18 month conflict.

Before agreeing to the out of court settlement, both parties sought clarification from the judge on the much disputed "hostile environment" test that had become the main point of the case.

Two female employees of the Water District claimed that a male employee made "hostile" comments to them over a period of three months prior to his leaving for a job in another state.

"We are pleased with the result of this settlement," said one of the plaintiffs. "Our basic point was to force the Water District to create, implement, and enforce a series of management policies that protect all employees who work for local government. This will be done."

The District's attorney agreed, "We have been slow to protect our employees from workplace harassment, but now we have an opportunity to create an even better workplace environment. We have already begun to do that."

Observers of the case were unsure if the plaintiffs could have proven management negligence. One courtroom observer said, "I'm not a lawyer, but it looked like some good was done here today."

of your water system. Take the steps necessary to meet all legal responsibilities.

Other laws that employers tend to violate are the Family and Medical Leave Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Family and Medical Leave Act. All public agencies and companies with 50 or more employees must permit eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks in a 12-month period for the following reasons: a serious health condition of the employee; a birth, adoption, or placement in foster care of a child under the employee's care; or a serious health condition of the employee's spouse, child, or parent. Eligible employees are those who have worked for the organization one year before the leave time is taken. The employer is not required to pay the employee's salary during the leave period.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA applies to all employers with more than 15 employees. However, public entities may be subject to this law regardless of size. The ADA requires the employer to provide reasonable accommodations for an employee with a disability to perform the essential job functions.

Working with Employees: Making the Job Better

Good employee relations add to job satisfaction in the workplace. Once local officials have the proper policies in place, employees will feel better because they will know where they stand. Officials should tap the staff's potential and take advantage of their full contribution. Empower employees so they can participate in decisions. Many managers or officials may be reluctant to give away power because this may be viewed as a sign of weakness. These attitudes are not good for the water system. Employees Work daily with the customers, suppliers, and operations. Usually they are the ones who know how to make improvements. Allow every employee to participate in management decisions and make contributions. Sharing power with employees increases employee motivation, communication, job skills, and trust.

ACTIVITY

From your perspective, rank the potential for improving the following managing skills in the four groups, listed across the top of the form. You can change these group names to match your community's management structure. Indicate whether the group has a high (H), medium (M), or low (L) need for improving its management skills by placing an "H," "M," or "L" in each cell.

H = High need for improvement M = Medium need for improvement L = Low need for improvement	Elected Officials	Board Members	Supervisors	Operators
Feedback				
Coaching				
Person-To-Person				
Group Communication				
Written Communication				
Priority Setting				
Delegating				
Time Management				
Managing by Standards				
Self-Development				

What are the implications of this informal assessment for how your water system "manages people?"

Glossary of Terms

Interview—The meeting between the job applicant and one or more representatives of the water system. The water system representatives should have a standard set of job related questions to ask all applicants. Depending on the position to be filled, it may be necessary to conduct more than one interview with each applicant.

Job Application Form—A standard form that all job applicants must complete by stating their education, work experience, and special skills. The applicant must certify by signature that all statements are correct.

Job Description—A list of the tasks that a person in a particular job is expected to perform. The tasks can be prioritized to include the most important duties and the ones to be performed “as time allows.” The job description forms a basis for the interview questions, the criteria for hiring, and performance assessments.

Performance Assessments—A formal process in which the employee’s work is evaluated in comparison to the job description. The assessment should be conducted at least once a year and scheduled in advance. The assessment involves both a written document and a private meeting with the employee.

Probationary Period—Also known as the “qualification period.” This is the pre-set time for the new employee to prove himself or herself. It can extend from three months to one year. The length and nature of the probationary period must be communicated to the employee in advance. An assessment should be conducted at the end of the period to determine if the organization wants the employee to continue with the organization.

Segregation of Duties—A basic internal control method, which is the first line of defense in protecting the assets of the water system: Jobs should be structured so that the person who has physical custody or access to an asset is not the same person who is responsible for verifying the existence of the asset.

Resource Organizations

The following list of resource organizations may be helpful to a small drinking water system:

<p>American Consulting Engineers Council (ACEC) 1015 15 Street, NW #802 Washington, DC 20005 Phone: (202) 347-7474 Fax: (202) 898-00068 Email: acec@acec.org American Institute of Architects (AIA) 1735 New York Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20006 Phone: (202) 626-7421</p>	<p>Friends of the Earth 1025 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 300 Washington, DC 20005 Phone: (202) 783-7400 Fax: (202) 783-0444 Web: http://www.foe.org The Groundwater Foundation R.O. Box 22558 Lincoln, NE 68542 Phone: (800) 858-4844 Fax: (402) 434-2742 Web: http://www.groundwater.org</p>
<p>American Water Works Association (AWWA) Public Affairs Department 6666 West Quincy Avenue Denver, Co 80235 Phone: (303)347-6284 Web: http://www.awwa.org Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies 1717 K Street, NW, Suite 1102 Washington, DC 20036 Phone: (202) 331-2820 Fax: (202)785-1845 Web: http://www.amwa-water.org Assoc. of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA) 1025 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 903 Washington, DC 20036 Phone: (202)293-7655 Web: http://www.asdwa.org</p>	<p>International City County Management Association (ICMA) 777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 500 Washington, DC 20002 Phone: (202) 289-4262 Fax: (202) 962-3500 Web: http://fcma.org Know Your Watershed 1220 Potter Drive, Room 170 West Lafayette, IN 47906-1 383 Phone: (765)494-9555 Web: http://www.ctic.purdue.edu/KYW/ Local Government Environmental Assistance Network (LGEAN); Operated by ICMA Ph: (877) 865 4326 Email: lgean@icma.org Web: www.lgean.com</p>
<p>Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities (CIFA) 805 15th Street, NW, Suite 500 Washington, DC 20005 Phone: (202) 371-9694 Web: http://www.cifanet.org Council of State Community Development Agencies Hall of the States 444 N. Capitol, Suite 224 Washington, DC 20001</p>	<p>National Association of Counties (NACO) 440 First Street, N.W., Suite #800 Washington, D.C. 20001 Phone: (202)393-6226 Fax: (202) 393-2630 Web: www.naco.org National Association of Towns and Townships (NATAT) 444 N. Capital Street, NW, Suite 208 Washington, DC 20001-1202 Phone: (202) 624-3550 Fax: (202) 624-3554</p>
<p>US EPA Environmental Finance Centers (EFC) Region 1: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT Phone: (207) 780-4418 Region 2: NJ, NY, PR, VA Phone: (315)443-9438 Region 3: DE, MD, PA, VA, WV, DC Phone: (301) 405-6383 Web: www.mdsg.umd.edu/MDSG/EFC Region 4: AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN Phone: (919)962-8494 http://www.netc.wvu.edu Web: www.unc.edu/depts/efc Region 5: OH, IN, IL, MI, WI, MN Phone: (216) 687-6947 Web: www.csuohio.edu/glefc Region 6: AR, LA, NM, OK, TX Phone: (505) 272-7357 Region 9: AZ, CAHI, NV, American Samoa, Guam Phone: (510)749-6867 Web: www.greenstart.org/efc9 Region 10: OR, WA, ID, AK</p>	<p>Web: www.natata.org a National Association of Water Companies 1725 K Street, NW, Suite 1212 Washington, DC 20006 Phone: (202) 8334383 Fax: (202) 331-7442 Web: http://www.nawc.org National Drinking Water Clearinghouse (NDWC) West Virginia University, R.O. Box 6064 Morgantown, WV 26506-6064 Phone: (800) 624-8301 Fax: (304) 293-3161 Web: HTTP://WWW.NDWC.WVU.EDU National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) West Virginia University, R.O. Box 6064 Morgantown, WV 26506-6064 Phone: (800) 6244301 Fax: (304) 293-3161 Web: http://www.netc.wvu.edu National League of Cities 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20004-1 763 Phone: (202) 626-3000 Fax: (202) 626-3043</p>

Resource Organizations

The following list of resource organizations may be helpful to a small drinking water system:

National Municipal League (State Chapters)

Alabama League of Municipalities: (334) 262-2566
Alaska Municipal League: (907) 586-1325
League of Arizona Cities And Towns: (602) 258-5786
Arkansas Municipal League: (501) 374-3484
League of California Cities: (916) 658-8200
Colorado Municipal League: (303) 831-6411
Connecticut Conference of Municipalities: (203) 498-3000
Delaware League of Local Governments: (302) 678-0991
Florida League of Cities: (850) 222-9684
Georgia Municipal Association: (404) 688-0472
Association of Idaho Cities: (208) 344-8594
Illinois Municipal League: (217) 525-1220
Indiana Association of Cities and Towns: (317) 237-6200
Iowa League of Cities: (515) 244-7282
League of Kansas Municipalities: (785) 354-9565
Kentucky League of Cities, Inc.: (606) 323-3700
Louisiana Municipal Association: (225) 344-5001
Maine Municipal Association: (207) 623-8428
Maryland Municipal League: (410) 268-5514
Massachusetts Municipal Association: (617) 426-7272
Michigan Municipal League: (734) 662-3246
League of Minnesota Cities: (651) 281-1200
Mississippi Municipal League: (601) 353-5854
Missouri Municipal League: (573) 635-9134
Montana League of Cities and Towns: (406) 442-8768
League of Nebraska Municipalities: (402) 476-2829
Nevada League of Cities: (775) 882-2121
New Hampshire Municipal Association: (603) 224-7447
New Mexico Municipal League: (505) 982-5573
New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials:
(518) 463-1185
North Carolina League of Municipalities: (919) 715-4000
North Dakota League of Cities: (701) 223-3518
Ohio Municipal League: (614) 221-4349
Oklahoma Municipal League: (405) 528-7515
League of Oregon Cities: (503) 588-6550
Pennsylvania League of Cities: (717) 236-9469
Rhode Island League of Cities/Towns: (401) 272-3434
Municipal Association of South Carolina: (803) 799-9574
South Dakota Municipal League: (605) 224-8654
Tennessee Municipal League: (615) 255-6416
Texas Municipal League: (512) 719-6300
Utah League of Cities and Towns: (801) 328-1601
Vermont League of Cities and Towns: (802) 229-9111
Virginia Municipal League: (804) 649-8471
Association of Washington Cities: (360) 753-4137
West Virginia Municipal League: (304) 342-5564
League of Wisconsin Municipalities: (608) 267-2380

Wyoming Association of Municipalities: (307) 632-0398

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRD)

Washington, DC 20005

Phone: (202) 289-6868

Web:

National Rural Water Association (INKWA)

2915 South 13th Street

Duncan, OK 73533

Phone: (580) 252-0629

Web:

State Rural water Associations

See NRWA website or phone number for specific National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE)

1420 King Street

Alexandria, VA 22314-2794

Phone: (703) 684-4811

Web: <http://llwww.nsoe.org>

Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP)

602 South King Street

Leesburg, VA 22075

Phone: (703) 771-8636

Web: <http://llwww.rcao.org>

Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC)

3120 Freeboard Drive, Suite 201

West Sacramento, CA 95691

Phone: (916) 447-9832

Web:

Community Resource Group, Inc.

P0 Box 1543, Fayetteville, AR 72702

Phone: (501) 443-2700

Web: www.cra.ora

Great Lakes RCAP

P0 Box 590, Freemont, OH 43420

Phone: (800) 775-9767

Web:

Midwest Assistance Program

P0 Box 181, New Prague, MN 56071

AA Northeast RCAP

218 Central Street, Winchendon, MA 01475

Web:

Southeast RCAP

145 Campbell Avenue, SW; Roanoke, VA 24001-2868

Phone: (540) 345-1184

Web: www.sercao.org

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA)—Rural Utilities

Service (RUS) 1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20250

Phone: (202) 690-2670

Web: k~,,,,,4~1I~l,Ir.mc~

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)

1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Ariel Rios Building

Washington, DC 20460

Phone: (202) 260-7786

U.S. Geological Survey

Hydrologic Information Unit

419 National Center, Arlington, VA 22092

Phone: (703) 648-6818

Sample Job Performance Assessment

Knowledge and Skills	Below Average
	Average
	Exceeds Average
Initiative and Self Direction	Below Average
	Average
	Exceeds Average
Problem Solving and Decision-making Ability	Below Average
	Average
	Exceeds Average
Work Quality and Accuracy	Below Average
	Average
	Exceeds Average
Dependability and Reliability	Below Average
	Average
	Exceeds Average
Ability to Work with Others	Below Average
	Average
	Exceeds Average
Employee Name:	Operational Duties (List)
	1
	2
	3
Position Title:	4
	5
	6
Summary of Job Duties and Tasks:	7
	8
	9
	10
	11
	12
	Management and Administrative Duties (List)
Employee Signature:	13
Supervisor Signature:	14
Mgt. Team Signature:	

Purple Creek Water Association, Inc.
Certified Water Operator

Job Summary:

Under the supervision of the Board of Directors of Purple Creek Water Association, the Certified Operator performs a wide variety of tasks necessary for the efficient production and distribution of water for sufficient quantity and quality to meet customer demand. This position will be on 24 hour call everyday including weekends and holidays. The position is hired by the full Board of Directors. There is a six month probationary period. Evaluations are conducted at the end of the probationary period and annually thereafter during the month of the association's annual membership meeting.

Education and Experience:

Requires at minimum a high school diploma or equivalent and at least two years experience working at a public water supply system. This position also requires a valid MSDH Class C (or higher) Water Operators Certificate. The board may waive the education and experience requirements if there are no applicants meeting the requirements for this position. However, if such a waiver is granted, the probationary period is automatically extended to one year in which time the person filling this position may be dismissed by a majority vote of the board if there is reasonable evidence that the lack of education and experience is hindering the execution of the required duties stated below.

Operational Duties:

- Adheres to MSDH Minimum Operator Guidelines.
- Ensures compliance with the state and federal EPA water quality standards.
- Provides regular oral and written Operations and Maintenance Reports to the Board summarizing system status I needs.
- Maintains and supervises control over the inventory of materials, supplies, chemicals, and equipment.
- Performs routine preventive maintenance inspections of equipment; performs repairs, adjustments, and maintenance of pumps, electric motors, valves, meters, chemical feeders, fire hydrants; lubricates and oils machinery; maintains gas engines and compressors; and maintains proper records of preventive maintenance work.
- Calculates water loss figures and supervises leak detection surveys when water lossage exceeds 25% of water produced.
- Responds to emergency conditions according to Purple Creek W. A.'s Standard Operating Procedures.

Duties Related to the Management and Administration of the System:

- Advises and assists the Board regarding repair / replacement of needed equipment.
- Develops estimates for recommended purchases of goods and services.
- Documents all maintenance activities on approved O-M Record Keeping System and presents copies of all work orders along with a statement to the board each month for review and approval.
- Works closely with the engineers, contractors, and state regulatory officials.
- Participates with the Board and consulting engineers in planning system improvements or expansions
- Handles customer inquiries and complaints related to water service or billing questions.

Required Knowledge and Skills:

- Extensive knowledge of the methods, practices, tools, and materials used in the operation, maintenance, and repair of water storage, treatment, and distribution equipment and machinery, including but not limited to:
- Extensive knowledge of chlorination disinfection and corrosion control equipment and required discharge rates.
- Working knowledge of the mechanics of pumps and other electrical equipment and machinery.
- Ability to learn plant electrical systems, power circuit changes, and circuit breaker resets.
- Ability to perform basic chemical tests.
- Ability to detect and diagnose faulty operation of equipment and make corrections.
- Thorough knowledge of the equipment, tools, and procedures used in installing and repairing water mains, services, fire hydrants, and meters.
- Knowledge of applicable laws and safety regulations for crew and public safety and the proper use of chlorine and other hazardous chemicals.
- Ability to plan, organize, and supervise the operation, maintenance, and repair of the utility's storage, treatment and distribution systems, and the organizational skills necessary for scheduling daily activities.

3.6 Customer Complaint Tracking