

## PREPARING FOR THE WATER TREATMENT GRADE 5 (T5) EXAM

The T5 exam is an oral exam. You have 30 minutes to show the panel that you can administer a water treatment plant of any size and type, anywhere in California.

Questions asked at the T5 exam are considered confidential. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) may suspend, revoke, or refuse to grant or renew any water treatment operator certificate or place on probation or reprimand the certificate holder upon any reasonable grounds, including dishonest conduct during an examination by sharing exam questions with anyone.

All T5 candidates, and the interview panel, will be given the following information.

- During the oral exam, it is assumed that you are the chief operator of your water treatment plant or the entire utility.
- You **MUST** have a complete understanding of all current regulations pertinent to a water treatment plant.
- Your plant or utility uses both groundwater and surface water.
- This source water may have all known quality problems.
- You have available for your use all known technology to solve these water quality problems.
- You must deal with all the staff in your utility.
- You must deal with the public.
- You must deal with the press.
- You must deal with the regulators – federal, state, county, and local.
- You must be aware of current water industry issues.
- You must know how to handle any emergency situation pertinent to a water treatment plant.
- Keep in mind that since you are the chief administrator of a water treatment plant, your answers should incorporate safeguarding of public health. Demonstrate the broader picture of ensuring your operation is safe and what you do is in the best interest of the public.

The T5 oral exam consists of six questions: two regulatory questions, two related to utility management and emergency situations, and two operational questions. The regulatory questions will test your knowledge of current regulations. The utility management questions will test your supervisory/managerial skills, emergency questions will test your ability to handle an emergency, and the operational questions will test your technical knowledge of water treatment.

### **Regulatory Questions**

The regulations chosen for the exam are those that a typical water treatment facility must deal with on a regular basis. Regulations concerning water treatment, water quality, notification requirements, and contaminants are all possible questions. Holding a T5 certificate qualifies you to be the chief operator at any water treatment plant in California, not just your current employer. This may mean that you will be asked questions about regulations that do not affect your water facility.

### **Utility Management**

During the exam, assume you are the chief operator. You should have a general knowledge of policies and procedures related to supervising and managing a work group. Know what resources are available to you and how to apply that knowledge in a water treatment facility. It is important that you can deal with sensitive personnel issues without compromising or putting public health at risk.

### **Emergency Questions**

Your answer should address several aspects of the problem. You should consider operator safety, public health risk, regulatory implications, and water demand requirements.

### **Operational Questions**

As a T5 operator, you should have a general knowledge of all the common contaminants found in California drinking water and treatment techniques being utilized in the industry today to treat those contaminants.

You may be asked how you would perform a typical process in a water treatment facility, such as disinfection. A complete answer to this question should include the types of disinfectants available, how and where they are applied, how effective they are, and what problems they may cause. If there are any regulatory requirements that apply to this situation, you should know those as well. Put yourself in the treatment plant and tell the panel how you would go about solving the problem.