



California  
Department of  
Health Services

**SANDRA SHEWRY**  
Director

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



**ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER**  
Governor

**California Operator Certification Program – Annual Report  
(June 30, 2004 – June 30, 2005)**

### **Water Treatment Facilities and Water Distribution Systems**

The operator certification database contains 2,871 facilities classified as water treatment facilities based on Section 64413 of the regulations. Approximately 200 systems previously listed as water treatment facilities last year are now considered water distribution systems under the current regulations. We are currently in the process of updating our database with the most recent classification information from our field offices that have the responsibility for classifying these systems. If the only treatment applied is disinfection, the system is classified as a distribution system, not a treatment facility. There are 4,710 water distribution systems in California that have been classified under the section 64413.3 of the regulations.

### **Water Treatment Operators**

There are 11,453 water treatment operators currently certified by the Department of Health Services, (DHS). The number of new water treatment operators has been decreasing each year since the water distribution certification program was established in 2001. This could be due to the retirement of older operators or the shift in certification requirements after 2001. Water distribution operators can now perform some of the positions once held by water treatment operators.

### **Water Distribution Operators**

There are 13,009 operators who hold full water distribution certification in California. This represents an increase of 13% over last year. There are an additional 3,448 operators who hold interim distribution certificates

#### **Interim Distribution Certification (Section 63810)**

Interim certification was established to allow water systems to obtain certification for the distribution operators they employed on December 31, 2000, the day before the regulations took effect. This type of certification is non-transferable to other water systems and expired on December 31, 2003. The interim certificate can be renewed once for an additional three years if the operator meets all of the current renewal requirements including obtaining continuing education. All interim certificates expire on December 31, 2006.



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We originally issued 8,538 interim water distribution certificates. Since then 2,826 of those interim operators have converted their interim to regular certification through the exam process and 3,902 renewed their certificates until December 31, 2006. There are currently 431 interim operators signed up for the next water distribution exam in October. Interim operators will have two more opportunities in 2006 to take the exam before their certificates expire.

## **Exam Validation**

The Operator Certification Unit is currently in the process of validating our water treatment and distribution exams. This process will ensure that the questions on the exams are based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to operate a water treatment facility or distribution system in California.

The validation process includes the following steps:

- 1) Recruit Subject Matter Experts (SME's) in the field of water treatment to assist in the validation process for water treatment exams or distribution exams, respectively.
- 2) Conduct a job analysis to identify the key tasks, knowledge, skills, and abilities required to operate a water treatment plant or water distribution system in California.
- 3) Convert the job analysis to a survey.
- 4) Conduct a survey of certified water treatment operators or distribution system operators to validate the SME job analysis.
- 5) SME's write new exam questions based on the survey results.
- 6) SME's review the exam questions and set a cut score for the exam.

### **Water Treatment Exam Validation**

The water treatment job analysis is complete. In October 2004 Cooperative Personnel Services (CPS) conducted a survey of certified water treatment operators based on the job analysis conducted by the Department. The results of the survey were used by a panel of subject matter experts to develop an examination plan that included a final weighting of tasks and knowledge required to operate a water treatment facility in California. We are currently working on validating the questions in our item bank through workshops conducted with subject matter experts.

### **Water Distribution Exam Validation**

The water distribution job analysis is complete. We are preparing a contract with CPS to convert this job analysis into a survey and distribute it to certified distribution operators. Once this process is complete CPS will produce a job analysis report that will be the basis for a new examination plan for the certification of water distribution operators.

## **Stakeholders Meetings**

A stakeholders committee continues to meet twice a year to discuss implementation of the operator certification regulations. This committee represents organizations and groups of people who are affected by the regulations. This includes members of the DHS Drinking Water Program, CA-NV-AWWA, Local Union 39, CRWA, RCAC, water distribution instructors and operators from water systems. The subject of the next meeting to be held on February 7, 2006 is

a review of the experience requirements for operator certification. Future meetings will include a review of other aspects of the regulations and discussion of any implementation problems that have occurred.

### Summary Matrix

<b>Certification</b>	<b># Certified</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Water Treatment Operators	11,453	We currently test 2,000 candidates annually, exams held twice a year.
Interim Distribution certificates	3,448	Expires 12/31/2006, cannot be renewed
Distribution Operators (regular certification)	13,009	We currently test 6,000 candidates annually, exams held twice a year.