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| **Topic or Issue: AWOP-Related Operator Training Topics**  Facilitators: Kimberly Barnett (NC), Jennifer Bunton (PAI)  Participants: Chris Affeldt (EPA R10), Michael Grange (UT), Reggie Lang (NV), Rebecca Templin (OR), Alicia Martinez (LA), Amelia Springer (KS), Brad Siefker (WI), Mary Jehle (FL), |
| **Topic Description and Objectives:**  Many states struggle with how to transfer AWOP-related technical training to their water system operators. Two states that are undertaking this task using different approaches (North Carolina and Minnesota) will each provide a brief overview of their initiatives to kick off the topic. The intent of this discussion is to generate ideas and inspiration for incorporating AWOP training topics into operator education. Successes and challenges will also be documented. Specific questions may include:   * How do operators get their continuing education in your state? * How are operators most successfully contacted for targeted training (e.g., directly, through the utility manager, through professional organizations, other)? * Do states have relationships with other training providers that could be used to leverage training oppor­tunities? For example, could the state provide training on an AWOP-related topic during an associa­tion conference, such as the AWWA section meeting? * Are AWOP-related topics such as data integrity being discussed at operator education classes? * How many systems in your state are participating in the Partnership for Safe Water? Do they obtain CEUs for participating or developing their assessments? * Would the state consider an option such as providing additional CEUs when hands-on training is pro­vided, as compared to classroom training? * Would operators be allowed to attend training at other water systems, or would managers prohibit this? * What kind of AWOP outreach are states providing for operators?   + Potential ideas to spark conversation:     - Develop a basic template for states to make their own AWOP newsletter (in the style of Alabama newsletter).     - Provide AWOP training in the style of the ASDWA DBP webinars.     - Offer free CEUs; highlight AWOP-related topics.     - Offer AWOP-related CEUs and track to allow rewarding based on some minimum threshold of training (i.e., special operator certificate for certain number of AWOP-related training hours).     - Offer CEUs for operator participation in sanitary surveys/CPEs.     - Include optimization topics in sanitary surveys to provide operator exposure to AWOP concepts.   This topic is primarily for ideas exchange among the participants; however, if specific action items are identi­fied, they will be documented. Overall feedback may be communicated during a NOLT update at future Regional AWOP meetings and/or posted on the AWOP *SharePoint* site.  The following ideas and successes were shared during this small group discussion.   * In Washington, it is up to operators to find training that works for them. They have Regional schools plus conferences. WA DOH has done some of their own training, including a class on measuring chlo­rine residuals. AWWA has picked this class up and is helping to distribute the class in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. They have helped with funding equipment costs. This is a hands-on, technical class that is three hours long, and they provide CEUs. Ideally, they would like all operators who disin­fect to take this class. * In Louisiana, most operators get their hours through the LA RWA. At these courses, LDH is provided a speaker slot, and Alicia has presented AWOP concepts at these meetings. * Kansas operators get their CEUs from TA providers. They have an operator school (*100 years of expe­rience!*) and the KS RWA conference. * Nevada works with RWA for training. The operator certification program requires courses to be pre-approved. When operators apply to renew their license, they are often surprised that a course they took was not pre-approved. * How do states target operators for training? * Oregon has articles they send out to show what type of internal training they are doing, such as essentials of surface water treatment. They have mailings they send out to all operators, and they have a website that they use to show all of the training opportunities that are available. * Washington has done six PBTs on a Regional basis to get good interaction between operators that are in the same areas. They have done CPE (non-triggered) and filter assessment trainings. They specifically reach out to operators for these types of trainings. * Are data integrity topics being discussed at operator trainings? * Louisiana has developed a Data Integrity and Special Studies training session that they just gave at a con­ference within the past month. This will be the topic of the next virtual training that they record. * How many systems are participating in the PSW, and do they receive CEUs for doing their assessments? * Washington has a few, but Jolyn doesn’t know whether they receive CEUs for their participation. * Louisiana, Washington, and Kansas all offer CEUs for hands-on training. If you go to a water plant and do a Special Study, would states allow CEUs for that? As long as it was discussed ahead of time, Louisiana would allow CEUs for this. * Would operators be allowed to attend trainings at other water system, or would managers prohibit this?   + North Carolina would not prohibit this. Oregon would also not prohibit this, but it would depend on the operators’ schedule and ability to get away. * Outreach to operators?   + Oregon has a newsletter (not AWOP-specific). * Ideas for transferring AWOP concepts to systems:   + On the sanitary survey, in the recommendation section, AWOP training ideas such as chloramina­tion, or chemical dosing can be listed for the operator, along with links to online training (Louisiana).   + Louisiana is doing virtual training. The next one will be recorded in one-hour intervals so that they can refer the operator to the specific topic. This was also included in a recent compliance letter.   + North Carolina is doing virtual training on AWOP for operators in conjunction with the operator association and AWWA. These could be recorded.   + Oregon had problems keeping track of who was in attendance, so their trainings must be live.   + Utah previously had a monthly operator webinar (live and recorded). At the end of the webinar, there was a quiz that the operator would take and could then submit to the operator certification section to obtain their CEUs.   + Reggie recently attended virtual safety training that required the camera be turned on the entire time, to ensure that participants are viewing the entire training. This was not well explained, and attendees were not aware that they would be removed from the training if their cameras were turned off. A person proctored the session to ensure attendance throughout the session.   + The NW section AWWA had some training that included poll questions throughout the training that had to be answered to obtain CEUs.   + NW section AWWA has offered *“training in the box.”* WA DOH used this to do their hands-on chlorine monitoring training. Consumables such as reagents were included in the box, and the sec­tion helped to subsidize the cost. There are four boxes, and whoever teaches the class must partici­pate in a training prior to teaching it. There are scripted slides with speaking notes, so it is a matter of learning how to do the workshops.   + Alicia likes the idea of sending the training materials to attendees for virtual training in a hands-on manner. Even if it is just a paper workshop, it might help, since participants rarely download train­ing materials even when they are asked to do so.   + Trying to do hands-on training is something that Brad finds interesting. In Wisconsin, they would likely need to find some operators who would be willing to participate. Most training in the state comes from TA providers, and they would need to be brought into the loop. Having a virtual (but hands-on) training would seem to provide a low risk, but high reward, training for operators. |
| **Related Challenges/Obstacles (if applicable)** |
| * A lot of training is not hands-on, and higher grade operators do not have a lot of high quality technical classes available. * Trying to incorporate AWOP into operator training seems somewhat overwhelming for Mary (FL DEP) because she doesn’t work in AWOP. Rural Water might be able to do something like this. |
| **Approach – and Related Solutions (if applicable)** |
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| **Action Steps** |
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