

Licensed Operator Program

SELF-ASSESSMENT
JUNE 2019 STAKEHOLDER MEETING



DIVISION OF WATER SUPPLY & GEOSCIENCE
PAT GARDNER, DIRECTOR
KRISTIN TEDESCO, PROGRAM SUPERVISOR




1

Meeting Purpose & Overview

The Division of Water Supply & Geoscience and the Division of Water Quality have been evaluating the Licensed Operator program.

Our goal is to evaluate existing processes, identify opportunities for improvement, consult with stakeholders, create and update guidance materials and Departmental forms, and ultimately implement interim and long-term changes.



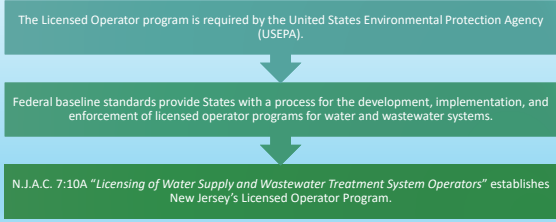
2

Program Overview


The Licensed Operator program is required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

Federal baseline standards provide States with a process for the development, implementation, and enforcement of licensed operator programs for water and wastewater systems.

N.J.A.C. 7:10A "Licensing of Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment System Operators" establishes New Jersey's Licensed Operator Program.



3



Program Goals

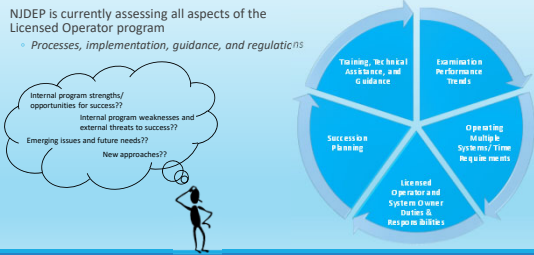
- o Ensure that all water and wastewater systems have the appropriate licensed operator
- o Assist with the training, certification, and license renewal of operators
- o Review training courses for initial certification and continuing education
- o Make training more available and affordable to operators
- o Use Federal funds to enhance program and assure that NJ meets EPA guidelines

4

NJDEP Program Evaluation

NJDEP is currently assessing all aspects of the Licensed Operator program

- o Processes, implementation, guidance, and regulations



5



6



Biggest Challenges Identified from Survey

1. Regulatory Requirements and Maintaining Compliance
2. Outdated Rules that Need to be Revised
3. Licensing Examinations
4. Licensing Training
5. Workforce Development and Management
6. Communication with NJDEP
7. Time Management and Work-Life Balance
8. Maintaining Consumer Confidence

7

"...switch from paper-based exams to computer-based exams..."

"...advanced technology and regulations should be included in the exams..."

"...there needs to be explanations as to why an exam application was denied so the applicant is given the chance to rectify and re-apply..."

"...stop making the test easier just to increase the amount of licensed operators..."

"...a new committee should be formed to go over the Introduction and Advanced course syllabi..."

"...the scoring methods for the exam need to improve..."

"...there needs to be more exam locations..."

Licensing Examinations

8

Licensing Examination


What are your concerns with the examination process?

How would you like the examinations to be conducted?

What materials would be beneficial to help prepare for the exams?

What guidance would be beneficial when applying to sit for the exams?

In what ways can the Introduction and Advanced course be improved to better prepare you for working in the field?



9

Licensing Training

"...there should be more ways to teach continuing education courses as well as a larger selection of continuing education courses for newer licensees..."

"...update the VSWS training manual..."

"...holders of multiple licenses should be able to attend continuing education courses and have them count towards their multiple licenses...it should not be restrictive of crediting one license per course..."

"...online seminars..."


10

Licensing Training

What existing training materials (such as the VSWS Manual) should be updated?

What new resources and/or materials would you like to see being used in training?

What are some organizations not highlighted that are good online continuing education course providers?



11

Workforce Development and Management

<i>"...recruiting, recruiting, recruiting..."</i>	<i>"...need to establish a 'pipeline' that generates interest in the water field..."</i>
<i>"...compel system owners to hire adequate staff..."</i>	<i>"...an Operator in Training license/program should be created..."</i>

12

Workforce Development and Management

What criteria would a system need to possess to be said that they have "adequate" staffing ?

How do you think recruiting efforts should be tailored to bring more interest to the drinking water/wastewater operator field?

What materials or assistance would be best for you to help your system's management/governing board/etc. better grasp the necessities of operating your system?



13

Regulatory Requirements, Compliance, and Revisions

"...there should be periodic reports mailed to the system on regulatory changes/updates..."

"...there should be a course that reiterates the new and existing regulations..."

"...there should be transparent AND realistic drinking water quality expectations..."

"...licenses should be active for a three-year term..."

"...there should be well-defined responsibilities laid out between the water system owner and permittee..."

"...reduce the number of years needed to upgrade your license..."

"...reciprocity applicants should be held to the same standard as in-state applicants..."

"...re-evaluate operating and direct responsible charge experience needed to obtain a license..."

14

Regulatory Requirements, Compliance, and Revisions

What assistance would be helpful for you when dealing with regulatory requirements expected of you and your system?

How do the existing regulations conflict or compete with your responsibilities as a licensed operator?

How can existing requirements/efforts be designed differently to work more effectively?

In your experience, are there other concerns not addressed in the existing regulations that the Department should be mindful of?

What considerations should the Department be mindful of in the licensing regulations?

- Items on the system point classification?
- The requirements for sitting for an examination?
- Determinations on operating multiple systems?



15



Next Steps

- Increased stakeholder involvement and other opportunities to solicit input on the Licensed Operator program
- Clarify roles of the water system owner and licensed operator
- Effective guidance materials for the licensees, licensed operators, and system owners
- Training and outreach initiatives for system owners, board members, municipal officials and other personnel involved with the operation of drinking water systems
- Renovate website and update pertinent resources

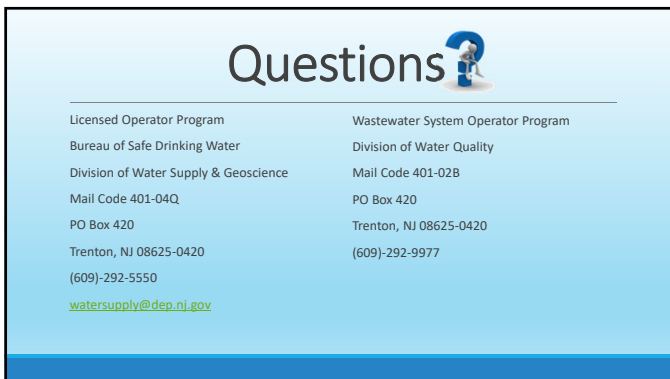
16



Key Implementation Dates

- Internal Stakeholder Meeting
Tuesday, April 17th, 2018
- NJAWWA Licensed Operator Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 24th, 2017 and Monday, June 18th, 2018
- External Stakeholder Meeting
Thursday, June 6th, 2019
- Future Stakeholder Meetings and Workgroups
Summer and Fall 2019

17



Questions

Licensed Operator Program	Wastewater System Operator Program
Bureau of Safe Drinking Water	Division of Water Quality
Division of Water Supply & Geoscience	Mail Code 401-02B
Mail Code 401-04Q	PO Box 420
PO Box 420	Trenton, NJ 08625-0420
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420	(609)-292-9977
(609)-292-5550	
watersupply@dep.nj.gov	

18
