2026 Perspectives in Waterworks OpCert

Sponsored by Washington Certification Services (WCS)

Event Time: 9:00am - 2:00pm PDT
Event Date: October 7th, 2026
Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83259642138
Register Here: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/cmi2d0EdcQ
Approved DW CEUs: 0.4

9:00-9:05 (5 min)	**Event Kick Off** Welcome, Introduction & Attendance Requirements for CEUs

Industry Overview & Insight	
9:05-9:35 (30 min)	**"Exploring the Job Analysis of Water Treatment Plant Operator "** Eric Shea - Washington Environental Training Center (WETRC) A job analysis is a systematic process used to identify the tasks, duties, and responsibilities required for a given type of position. For water system operators, these analyses are used for many purposes, from creating job descriptions by utility employers to establishing the criteria for water operator certification exams. Recently the Water Supply Technology program at Green River College had an opportunity to develop a job analysis for the position of water treatment plant operator that is specific to Washington. This session will explore the method and results of this analysis and see how the work of the water treatment plant operator in Washington compares to the U.S.
9:35-9:55 (20 min)	**"Department of Health Update"** Bill Bernier - Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water (DOH) Provide an overview of the need for Certified Waterworks Operators. Describe recent trends in the workforce. Indentify resources available and suggest possible solutions.
9:55-10:15 (20 min)	**"Career Journey of a Dual Certified Operator"** Brian McDaniel - BAT, Waterworks and Wastewater Certified Operator Hear directly from a certified operator about their career journey and the benefits of being certified as a BAT, Waterworks and Wastewater operator. Gain insight and tips to apply to your own professional growth, or simply feel proud and inspired to be a part of the industry.
10:15-10:25 (10 min)	**Poll for Attendance** Break

Apprenticeship Programs

10:25-10:55 (30 min)	**"Water Operator Apprenticeship"** John Roth & Andrew Holmes - Clark Public Utilities Describe the process to commission a registered apprenticship program with the Department of Labor and Industries. Describe how the apprenticeship sets the standards for water operators, documenting what education and expereience are required to successfully work for a public water systems maintaining a sustainable, safe, reliable water system that protects and benefits customers.
10:55-11:25 (30 min)	**"ERWOW Apprentice & Pre-Apprentice Program"** Ernie Klimek - Evergreen Rural Water of Washington (ERWOW) This session will describe the apprentice and pre-apprentice programs available at ERWOW.
11:25-11:40 (15 min)	**"Apprenticeship Insight"** Theron Perry - City of Rainier Theron will be sharing about his professional journey. He changed careers at 51 years old, knowing very little about the Public Water System or getting training through the Apprenticeship program at ERWOW. He has achieved his WDM 1 and CCS certification through the QUEST program. He joined the year two apprentice program and obtaine dhis WDM 2 certification. He became the Public Works Director for the City of Raininer and obtained his Professional Operator Certification all in a short five years. "If you have the desire and ambition, the sky in the limit!"
11:40-11:50 (10 min)	**Poll for Attendance** Break

Technical Sessions

11:50-12:20 (30 min)	**"Cross Connection Control & Backflow Prevention"** Blake Nylund - Thurston Public Utilities Overview on cross-connection control (CCC) and backflow preventer testing topics (TBA) from both a compliance manager perspective (purveyor) and private backflow tester prospective.
12:20-12:50 (30 min)	**"PFAS Mitigation Strategy & Lessons Learned by a Regional Water Provider"** Marshall Meyer - Lakewood Water District This presentation explores practical, effective approaches for addressing PFAS contamination in drinking water sources. Attendees will gain actionable insights into monitoring strategies, including recommended frequency and methods that can be incorporated into routine operational practices. Focusing on water quality and public health protection, the session highlights cost-effective solutions water systems can implement to manage PFAS challenges. Like many utilities nationwide, Lakewood Water District has detected PFAS in several groundwater sources. In response, the District has developed and is implementing a comprehensive mitigation strategy to protect its water supply. This strategy includes a combination of treatment and source replacement, such as constructing new wells and installing two granular activated carbon (GAC) treatment systems. The presentation will share key considerations, project timelines, and lessons learned from Lakewood's real-world experience. Attendees will walk away with a better understanding of how to develop and execute a PFAS mitigation plan tailored to their own system's needs.
12:50-1:00 (10 min)	**Poll for Attendance** Break

Administrative Sessions	
1:00-1:30 (30 min)	**"Communication and Feedback That Builds Trust"** Kim Conant - FIT HR Effective communication is about far more than the words we choose. In this session, participants will explore practical communication techniques that strengthen relationships, reduce misunderstandings, and make performance feedback more productive. We will examine how unconscious nonverbal communication can unintentionally undermine our message, learn the four essential steps of active listening, identify common communication pitfalls that prevent genuine understanding, and practice using the SBI (Situation–Behavior–Impact) feedback model to deliver clear, objective, and constructive performance feedback. Participants will leave with practical tools they can immediately apply to build trust, minimize conflict, and foster stronger, more cohesive teams.
1:30-1:50 (20 min)	**"How to Fast-Track Certification Applications"** Megan Brech - Washington Certification Services (WCS) The application for WDM/WTPO/WDS/CCS exams has been updated a couple times over the past two years. We'll review the newest version that rolled out this Fall. No future updates are planned for the forseeable future, so knowing how to navigate the current version will support applicants for years to come.

1:50-2:00 (10 min)	**Event Wrap Up** Follow up E-mail, Survey & Final Poll for Attendance