“Every Crisis Is An Opportunity: Answers for Water and Wastewater Operator Shortage”

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The Crisis in Ontario

E.coli ‘epidemic’ hits almost 600
Deadly E.coli outbreak claims its fourth victim

Ministry admits water errors
E.coli crisis: Province scrambles for answers

Workers set to flush out every kitchen sink, dishwasher and bathtub

May 2000 - Walkerton Tragedy
Walkerton Inquiry Report

Inquiry Recommendations

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Roles of Laboratories
- Training of Operators
- Source Protection
- Drinking Water Standards
- Water Treatment Operations
- Quality Management Standards
Legislative Changes

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<td>Nov – Variations Premier’s Report</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>2002</th>
<th>Jan – Municipal Water Act</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Oct – O. Reg. 124</td>
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<td>Apr – Procedure for Determination of Drinking Water in Ontario</td>
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<td>O. Reg. 124</td>
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<th>2004</th>
<th>Mar – O. Reg. 125</th>
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<td>Directive of Approval Conditions – O. Reg. 125</td>
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<th>2005</th>
<th>Jan – O. Reg. 126</th>
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<td>June – O. Reg. 127</td>
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<th>2006</th>
<th>June – Amendments to O. Reg. 179 and O. Reg. 180</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Oct – Clean Water Act</td>
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<td>O. Reg. – Approved Drinking Water Quality Management Standard</td>
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The Crisis facing Drinking Water Industry

- Survival mode due to chronic shortage of certified water operators

- AWWA reports that
  - More people are retiring from water and wastewater industry than are entering it
  - Water and wastewater systems are the fastest growing utility (urban sprawl)
  - Loss of institutional knowledge
  - Water and wastewater operator not looked at as a profession

- Watertight reports that ‘It is not just the front line which is experiencing a shortage of trained people...there appears to be some shortage of specialized staff.’
Ministry of the Environment
O. Reg. 128/04 Implications

- Grand-parented Operator Deadline
- Training Hours Specified Dependent Upon Certification Level
- Total Training Hours Increased
- Wastewater Operator Deadline Imminent

Award Winning Program Developed

- Hired a Technical Training Specialist
- Orientation Program for New Operators
- Modified Hiring Practices
- Incentives in Collective Agreement
- Operators Training One Another

- OPWA Management Innovation Award
- OPWA Young Leader of the Year Award
- Public Sector Quality Fair – National Quality Institute Gold Award
Change in Expectations

- Certification Examinations have Melded from Failures to Successes
- Licenced Operator Becoming a Career
- Employee Development Courses Encouraged
- Career Advancement Based on Technical Ability and Practical Aptitude

Incentive Program

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Job Requirement: Crewperson &amp; Tapper/Rodder Level 1 WD, WWC Plant Operator Level 1, WDS, WWC, WT</th>
<th>Incentive Applies for Each Level above the Minimum for the Job, for Each License the Operator Holds:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 2: $0.20 for Each License</td>
<td>Level 3: $0.30 for Each License</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crewperson $ 22.31</td>
<td>$ 22.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapper/Rodder $ 23.27</td>
<td>$ 23.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Operator $ 24.27</td>
<td>$ 24.67</td>
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Employee’s Obligation

- Operator-in-Training (OIT) has 6 Months to Pass the Level I Exam in Water
- OIT has 9 Months to Pass Mandatory Entry Level Course
- OIT has 12 Months to Pass Level I Exam in Wastewater
- Failure = Termination
- Limited Number of Exam Reimbursements

Training Programs Developed

- MOE Director Approved Courses Delivered
  - English as a Second Language Exam Prep course for GP operators
  - Safe Drinking Water Act Course
  - Meter Installer Program
- Cross Training Programs Developed
  - Pumping Station Tours
  - New Operators
  - Existing Operators
- Safety Courses
  - Trenching and Shoring
  - WHMIS Refresher
  - Confined Space Rescue Equipment
Succession Planning Concepts

- Leadership Journey
  - Critical Mass of Leaders Amongst Technical and Front Line Staff

- Feedback Forms for Bargaining Staff
  - Outlines career development options
  - Highlights training needs

- Partnership with Sheridan College

Keys to Success

A Certified Adult Trainer Embedded in the Water Department

- Rapport Building is an Important Component to Success
- Guidance Counselor Offers Career Development Advice
- Trainer Understands Needs of Water Industry
- Comprehension of Training Guidelines and a Relationship with the Ministry is Imperative to Remain in Compliance
- All MOE Legislated Training Tracked and Coordinated Centrally
Keys to Success

Relationship with Human Resources

- Support for Training Specialist Embedded in the Water Department
- Support for Incentive Concept
- Support for Recognition of Operator as a Well Educated, Highly Skilled Employee

Operator Training and Certification Expert Panel

- Has Representatives on Ontario Waterworks Association Training Committee, MOE/ECO Reference Group, MOE Licenses and Certification Steering Committee, OPWA Communication/Education Committee
- Ontario-wide Membership Includes: Regions of Peel, Halton, Durham, York, Niagara, Town of Markham, City of Toronto, City of London, MOE
- Discuss Training Programs and Certification Issues
- Knowledge Sharing and Development of Best Practices
Department-wide Leadership Journey

• First Journey
  – Commissioner, Directors, Managers
  – Q9 360 Assessment
  – Core Course Program

• Second Journey
  – Supervisors, Forepersons, and Project Managers

• Third Journey
  – Front Line Staff, and Technical Specialists

The Region of Peel Philosophy

“The Region of Peel is committed to broaden its operators opportunities and give them every chance to succeed in the Water/Wastewater industry.”
Region of Peel & Sheridan College Partnership

- Water and Wastewater Program Customized and Delivered on Site
- Meets MOE Training Requirements for CEUs
- Ontario College Certification upon Graduation
- Peel Recruits Instructors
- Peel Provides Expert Advice
- Peel Promotes to Outside Agencies

Water Supply and Distribution Program

- Math and Science for Water Distribution
- Operations and Maintenance of Water Supply, Storage and Distribution
- Water Quality and Compliance
- Administration for Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection
- Technical Projects and Reports
- Equipment Maintenance
The Operator Benefits

• Recognition by Peers
• Self Esteem/Personal Excellence
• Career Development
• Upward Mobility and Increased Marketability
• Influence Personal Income

The Organization Benefits

• Valuable Resource
• Part of Talent Management
• Educated/Empowered Employee
• Improves Corporate Image
• Management Sleeps at Night
• Happier Operators
• Labour/Management Relations
• Attract Qualified Operators
• Removal/Reassignment of Operators
Testimonials

• “You Care About Us and What WE Want”
• “I am Losing Money Right Now”
• “When Can I Write My Level 2?”
• “I Want to Write My Wastewater Now So I Can Be Free and Clear (of Grand-Parented Status)”
• “I Have Learned So Much Studying for These Exams”

Questions?