



COMMITTEE REVISING CANADIAN RECIPROcity AGREEMENT

In September 2008, an ABC/Provincial and Territorial meeting in Toronto established the Canadian Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Committee and set several goals, including conducting a review and revision of the existing 1998 Canadian Reciprocity Agreement.

Brian Gildner, ABC at-large division director, says the revision will not only update language and industry organizations that have changed, but highlight ABC's involvement with Canadian reciprocity. "We want to have a larger role for ABC, whether that's a direct role, or a guiding role," said Gildner, who is serving as a committee member representing Ontario.

The update will also provide consistency with the Canadian Agreement on Internal Trade, a new document which will ensure full labor mobility for all occupations in Canada and encourage provinces to strive towards consistency in program standards.

Discussions of reciprocity began in the late 70's and Gildner says these conversations, along with work of ABC committees have continued setting high certification standards and benefited the industry and operators. "From the point of view of the operators, reciprocity is a positive development for the industry," he said. "It reinforces common standards and ultimately allows qualified persons to move without any barriers."

Provincial, Territorial and ABC representatives will meet September 16-17, 2009, in Edmonton, Alberta, at the Canadian Regional Best Practices Meeting to review and finalize the text for the reciprocity agreement.

Read more: Log in to the member area to view an article on the history of Canadian reciprocity and download *The Certifier* - Winter 2008 for the Toronto meeting overview.

On the Web

Best Practices Survey Released in Summer 2009

Development of the ABC Best Practice Guidelines for Certification Programs has been the task of the ABC Certification Committee this year. This summer, programs across the U.S. will begin receiving a series of surveys aimed at recording regulatory and voluntary certification program common best practices.

Laurie Sharp, Certification Committee Chair, emphasizes the importance of survey participation. "We've all spent the last decade getting our programs started and bringing them up to EPA standards. Most of us have the minimum requirements set up," she said. "With the information collected, we're striving to better our programs, not just meet minimum requirements."

The surveys were initially developed by the Canadian provinces to define Canadian Certification Best Practices and the committee is evaluating and altering the surveys to broaden its audience and include the entire ABC regulatory and voluntary program membership, as well as non-member certification programs.

Once completed in 2010, the best practices guidelines will be available to the public.

WHAT'S INSIDE

This edition of *The Certifier* holds the latest in certification news and events, including:

- Awards Recognize Environmental Certification Efforts
- Pandemic Flu Preparedness for Water Systems
- Board of Directors Meeting Highlights
- ABC Upcoming Events

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Why attend?

Network with colleagues, build professional relationships and make lasting connections at ABC's 23rd Annual Conference. Other reasons to attend include:

- Hear outstanding technical presentations and participate in breakout sessions
- Associate with peers
- Participate in discussions and hear diverse perspectives on key issues and industry topics
- Exchange methods, experiences and ideas with attendees
- Meet water and wastewater certification professionals from across the globe
- Share your experiences during conference Open Microphone sessions
- Earn continuing education units
- Enjoy the sights and sounds of Jacksonville



Annual Conference Preview

We hope to see you at [ABC's 23rd Annual Conference](#) – “Certifying the Future” – in Jacksonville, Florida, January 26-29, 2010.

Each year our conference brings together industry professionals from across the globe including the U.S., Canada, Jordan, Caribbean Islands and Pacific Islands.

The conference focuses on providing an environment where industry professionals can share certification issues unique to their program, learn from other attendees and hear speakers addressing key industry topics related to certification.

In the coming months, you'll receive a conference preview guide, which will include registration materials, session topics, presenters and conference information. Don't miss your opportunity to register and attend the 23rd Annual Conference – “Certifying the Future”.

See you in Jacksonville!

John Solvie, 2010 ABC Conference Chair

Awards Recognize Environmental Certification Advancement Efforts

The ABC Awards Committee is seeking nominations to recognize the efforts of its members, volunteer board and committee members, and others who advance environmental certification. Nominations must be received by June 30, 2009. These awards are:

- The **Harris F. Seidel Award** recognizing lifetime achievement
- The **Certification Program Award** recognizing the outstanding contribution by a member certification authority in establishing or advancing certification.
- The **Robert C. McAnespie Certification Officer Award** recognizing a member certification officer for outstanding contribution in establishing or advancing certification.
- The **Excellence in Service Award** recognizing the efforts of a volunteer, or groups of volunteers, for outstanding service to ABC.

[Click to download detailed award descriptions, nomination application and guidelines and read about previous award recipients.](#)

On the
Web

Pandemic Flu Preparedness for Water Systems

Kim Dyches, ABC Board of Directors past president, shares his experience as a member of the State of Utah Task Force for emergency measure preparation in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak.

With the recent outbreak of the swine flu (H1N1) virus, I was asked to write on what actions water systems and government agencies should take in the event of a major outbreak.

With the threat of the avian flu (H5N1) virus a couple of years ago, the Utah governor established a task force to address the state's role and emergency measure preparation in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak. I was appointed to be on the task force to address drinking water concerns.

Personally, I find it odd that the H1N1 virus now circulating happened after the normal flu season, which as a rule is wrapping up in March. I don't want to cause alarm, just offer some food for thought. With our advanced medical technology and modern surroundings, it seems we at times become complacent thinking the days of plagues and outbreaks are over. Rightly so – most of us, including myself, have never seen a major outbreak.

I remember standing in line as a child and taking the polio vaccine on a sugar cube. Because of vaccination programs, diseases such as small pox, polio, mumps, and others aren't the threats they were years ago. However, in 1918 there was an influenza pandemic outbreak killing millions worldwide.

Impact of an Outbreak

We think of the current H1N1 virus as something major, but so far the number of deaths is much lower than the average number of people who die from the regular strains of flu on an annual basis. Imagining the impact a pandemic flu outbreak would have on our world and water system personnel offers many considerations.

A pandemic in a small community could create inability to obtain qualified and certified operators to run the system if operators became infected. Smaller water systems don't have the luxury of larger systems with multiple staff to step in and take over if their primary operator became ill. Large systems would also feel the impact and its operators may need to help fill in for a neighboring water system. Public communication is important in the water business so operators are at a higher risk of becoming infected through interactions with contagious individuals. Most agencies may lack proper masks and equipment to protect operators from infection.

Currently, training on protecting one's self from infection is non-existent in most areas. I believe there is a lack of cross training with operators and system personnel on jobs within each agency. With an outbreak, there is a possibility of interrupted communication with our vendors. In our world, we use the telephone, e-mail, fax, and the postal service to communicate. Imagine the impact if those we normally were to communicate with were bedridden in a hospital with no one to fill the void.

(Pandemic continued on back cover)

Preparing for an Outbreak

Advanced planning can lessen the impact of a pandemic:

Ensure adequate routine maintenance has been performed before flu season hits.

Join your Water/Wastewater Agency Resource Network (WARN) by having a memorandum of understanding with a neighboring water system. Water systems can serve as a back up to each other.

Perform an assessment of the supply chain risks and know if your suppliers are prepared. Have back-up sources for critical domestic and imported supplies.

Develop a strategy to sustain normal business operations during a pandemic event and incorporate a management strategy for proper disposal of waste.

Plans should be made for alternate sources that would provide transportation or in-house accommodations for critical workers.

Strategies should be developed for handling continuity of operations for water & wastewater systems.

More information on this topic is available from:
Crisis Management International
Website: www.thompsoninteractive.com

ABC Board of Directors

Meeting Highlights

The ABC Board of Directors Conference Call meetings were held on May 19 and June 4. Meeting highlights include:

Membership Committee

- The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality's Wastewater Licensing Committee

has been approved for regulatory membership with ABC.

Annual Conference

- Update on 2010 conference planning activities
- 2011 Conference Site - the Board approves the selection of the Embassy Suites Phoenix/Scotts-

dale as the site for the 2011 ABC Annual Conference to be held January 25-28.

V&E Committees:

- The President and CEO will thank V&E committee members and their employers for their service to ABC.

Annual Conference Registration - Summer 2009:

Registration materials will be available online. Look for your e-newsletter and conference preview guide.

Award Nominations Submission Deadline -

June 30

ABC office closed in observance of Independence

Day - July 3

Canadian Exam Development Workshop - July

9-10; Toronto, Ontario

Wastewater Treatment V&E Committee Meeting -

August 14-15; St. Louis, MO

ABC office closed: Labor Day - September 7

Canada Regional Meeting: Best Practices -

September 16-17; Edmonton, Alberta

ABC Board of Directors Meeting - September 26;

Minneapolis, MN

[For the most current information, visit the online calendar](#)

ABC Welcomes New Members

Two programs have been approved for membership by the ABC Board of Directors:

- **Central States Water Environment Association**
- **Arkansas DEQ Wastewater Licensing Committee**

Notice: Application Processing to be Delayed June 15 - July 17, 2009.

ABC is working to implement a more efficient system for processing and maintaining records for certification applications. Unfortunately, during the transition to the new system there will be a delay in processing ABC certification and renewal applications received between **June 15 and July 17, 2009.**

You may continue to submit applications during that time and payments will be processed, but please be aware that the applications will not be processed until after July 17th, when they will be handled in the order received. The actual date received will be used to determine whether your renewal is submitted on time.

(Pandemic continued)

H5N1 Risk

Should establishment of efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission of the virus occur, we are at risk for a pandemic. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), although H5N1 has never circulated widely among people, almost 200 have been infected with more than 50 percent of those cases resulting in death. As the virus evolves, so does the risk of sustained human to human transmission.

If a pandemic were to occur, the potential impact to any given agency could be absenteeism of not only sick employees, but a substantial amount of those staying home due to fear of becoming infected and passing the flu virus on to their family members. Overall, government services could suffer disproportional to private industry, including possibilities of:

- border closures and travel restrictions across states

- impact on manufacturing and service industry
- hospital quarantines and overwhelmed health care providers

The affect worldwide could be devastating as the economy could grind to a halt. There could be shortages in the supply chains that range anywhere from accessing fuel for vehicles to supplies required to operate your systems.

Water System Preparations

Any given water system could see a disruption of essential services such as chemical, product and even package deliveries. There could be a surge for certain products while other supplies dry up. Having an inventory of repair parts could play a significant role in lessening the impact on your water system.

Your agency should consider that normal operations could spread the virus. There could be an impact on safety and security of your infrastructure. In order to mini-

mize the risk to outsiders that visit or contract work with an organization, infected employees may be quarantined or asked to minimize their contact with employees. Psychological trauma may have an effect on workers who have watched friends, family, and co-workers become ill or die from the virus.

There would be an element of panic and helplessness of not knowing how to handle your normal job for fear of becoming ill. Those individuals in the community relying on government services, such as the elderly, for assistance may not have anyone to deliver those services.

As those in the water and wastewater industry, we need to know that a pandemic will affect all of us in one way or another. Planning and preparedness are key in minimizing the effects of a pandemic should it happen here.