

Operator Certification Working Group

March 25 & 26, 1997

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National Drinking Water Advisory Council
Washington, D.C.

"THE PARTNERSHIP"

I. BACKGROUND

The SDWA amendments required that EPA initiate a partnership with States, public water systems, and the public to develop information for States on recommended operator certification requirements. The partnership was formed as a working group under the National Drinking Water Advisory Council (NDWAC). The first meeting of this 21 member partnership was held on March 25-26, 1997 in Washington, D.C.

II. MAJOR ISSUES RAISED AND ADDRESSED AT THE MEETING

ISSUE 1: Interpretation of Provisions 1420 (Information) and 1419 (Guidelines) - Is a document recommending certification requirements the same as a document specifying certification minimum standards? Is there to be 1 or 2 documents? A correlated issue was raised - Is there to be 1 or 2 operator certification working groups? A partnership working group and a EPA/State work group?.

Conclusion: The discussion among the partnership led to preparing an information document that would be used in preparation of a second document, the "guidelines". EPA stated there will be two working groups, but to relieve concerns about the role of the partnership vs. the role of the EPA/State work group, EPA stated that "everything the EPA/State work group does is going to come through the partnership. The partnership will provide advice to NDWAC, who will recommend to EPA."

ISSUE 2: What should the Information document for the States look like?

Conclusion: The information document will have 6 parts. These include: 1.) A clearly stated cover letter detailing who the document is for and it's purpose 2.) Chapter 6 of The National Academy of Sciences Report 3.) List of all State Operator Certification Officers and State Drinking Water Program Managers 4.) Association of Boards of Certification document, "Operator Certification Program Standards" 5.) Preliminary Summary of State Operator Certification Programs with modifications requested by the partnership 6.) The partnership's Recommended Key Standards for a State Certification Program. Parts 2,3,4 are final. Partnership needs to finalize parts 1, 5, 6 at next meeting.

ISSUE 3: What are the Key Standards for a State operator certification program?

Conclusion: Through discussion, a list of 12 Key Standards was made. Of the 12 suggested, 8 were acceptable to a majority of the partnership members. These include: Authorization; Classification of Systems, Facilities, and Operators; Enforcement; Resources Needed to Implement a Program; Operator Certification; Certification Renewal; Recertification; Public Involvement/Stakeholder Board of Certification. The remaining four suggested, Coverage; Program Review; Reciprocity; and Training require more

discussion. Upon completion of further discussion, the key standards identified will be fleshed out again before becoming final. This process will be accomplished at the next partnership meeting.

III. NEXT STEPS

- Hold the second meeting of the Partnership on June 5-6 in Washington , DC to complete Issue 2 and finalize Issue 3.
- Get consensus on the information document going to NDWAC for their consideration. Document must arrive at NDWAC by September 1 for full Council review at their October meeting. Information document must be provided to the States by EPA no later than February 2, 1998. (This is a statutory requirement.)