



Tanya Lubner

# Certification Revamp

The Water Quality Assn. (WQA) recently overhauled its certification and education program to focus on the real-life activities that dealers perform everyday. *Water Quality Products* Managing Editor Kate Cline recently spoke with Tanya Lubner, WQA's director of education and certification, about the new program and how it will affect members.

**Kate Cline:** Describe the new modular education program. What are the benefits of the new structure?

**Tanya Lubner:** The new program completely changes the way WQA delivers its distance educational materials and increases the effectiveness of that material in improving job performance. The education will be delivered through a series of bite-sized online courses, self-study and experiential activities that blend real world problem solving with targeted background reading. By leveraging technology and cutting-edge learning strategy, the new program will deliver more effective training and education that will help employees develop competency and expertise faster than traditional methods.

**Cline:** How does it differ from the former education structure?

**Lubner:** WQA's previous education consisted of formal learning through textbooks. While the textbooks provided a wealth of technical background information, they were missing instruction and examples of practical applications. This is fine for higher education, but it's not an efficient method for an employer to help personnel achieve competency and expertise in their jobs. The better approach is a deliberate combination of formal instruction and on-the-job activity, which is what the new program accomplishes. The new program takes all the great information in the textbooks and links it to practical examples, both in online courses and in the self-study/experiential activity formats.

**Cline:** How will the experiential learning activities improve the learning experience?

**Lubner:** The experiential learning activities are key in reinforcing the application of the background technical information to the learner's on-the-job activities and the problems and questions they address in the field. In addition, the experiential activities require that a mentor—often a more experienced person within the learner's company or a willing tech support person from the company's vendor—approve the learner's answers. This interaction allows the mentor and the employer to be sure the learner is getting the right information and helps monitor the learner's progress. For the learner, having the interaction with the mentor helps him or her to learn the right information the first time, without wasting time on trial-and-error learning that can be costly in terms of time, repair efforts and the company's

reputation. We have been pilot testing the mentoring aspect of the program and the response we have received from the learners, the mentors and the employers has been tremendously positive.

**Cline:** How will current certification levels change?

**Lubner:** The basic certification levels—Certified Installer (CI), Certified Water Specialist (CWS) and Certified Sales Representative (CSR)—will remain largely unchanged, with the exception of the CSR being retitled to Certified Water-Treatment Representative (CWR). What will change is how candidates prepare for the exams. The certification exams are meant to gauge not only accumulated knowledge, but also the application of that knowledge to on-the-job activities. This is why those who only study the textbooks without any field experience usually do not do very well on the exams. Beginning in March 2015, completing the Basics, Fundamentals and appropriate Core curricula will become a prerequisite for examination. This will help ensure that the certification candidate gets the necessary field experience. It also will make preparing for the exam a less overwhelming prospect.

**Cline:** How will those currently certified be affected?

**Lubner:** As of March 2015, we are going to be grandfathering existing certificants into the adjusted certification titles. CIs and CWS-Is will retain their titles. CSRs also will retain their titles, but will be renamed CWRs. We feel the CWR title better reflects salespeople's water treatment expertise than CSR does.

Anyone who is a CWS-V or -VI as of March 2015 will be grandfathered into Master Water Specialist (MWS). The CWS-II through -IV titles will be discontinued. Those title holders will become CWSs. Anyone currently holding CWS-II through -IV has until March 2015 to take the necessary specialty exams to become a CWS-V and get grandfathered in as MWS. After March 2015, they will need to complete the Advanced curriculum to be eligible for the MWS title. *wqp*

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For more information on this subject write in 1009 on this issue's reader service card.

## MoveOn Backs Local Campaigns to Stop Fracking

MoveOn.org Civic Action announced a new #FrackingFighter initiative to support 100 grassroots activists who are working to ban fracking in their local communities. The organization is awarding a total of \$50,000 to the Fracking Fighters, along with materials, training and strategic support. The initiative seeks to slow down the fracking boom that is anticipated to occur across the U.S. in 2014 and beyond.



## President Obama Signs Hydrant Bill

President Obama signed HR3588, the Community Fire Safety Act, into law in December 2013. The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives had passed the bill unanimously earlier in the month. The new law exempts fire hydrants from compliance with the Reduction of Lead in Drinking Water Act, which took effect Jan. 4, 2014.



## WQA Aquatech USA 2014 Registration Open

Registration for WQA Aquatech USA 2014 is open. The event will be held March 18 to 21 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla. This annual event features hands-on training and networking opportunities, extensive educational offerings and an exhibition of the industry's newest technology.

## NGWA Groundwater Expo Records Strong Numbers

The National Ground Water Assn.'s (NGWA) 2013 Expo, which took place last December in Nashville, Tenn., posted strong numbers in both attendance and exhibitors. More than 3,680 attended the event. Attendees spanned all sectors of the groundwater industry, from water well drillers to contractors, manufacturers to suppliers, scientists to engineers. All 50 states were represented, along with Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and 32 other nations.

## WRF Project Evaluates Biological Filtration

The Water Research Foundation is helping water utilities improve their understanding of monitoring and controlling biological filtration (BF) through a recently completed research project: "A Monitoring and Control Toolbox for Biological Filtration." The project provides a BF monitoring and controlling toolbox that contains practical, innovative and standard monitoring tools. A guidance manual describes the tools in the toolbox—their pros and cons, how they are applied, typical measurement ranges, recommended monitoring frequencies and related costs. *wqp*



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