Ethics in Operations

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Drinking Water Inspections, Compliance, Enforcement, and Operator Certification
Ethics in Operations

- Important definitions
- Why ethics are important as an operator
- Rule relating to ethics
- Examples of situations relating to ethics
Definitions

- **Certified Operator:** An individual who holds a current certificate issued by the Department in the field of water or wastewater treatment, water distribution, or wastewater collection. (R18-5-101)

- **Ethics:** Moral principles that govern a person’s behavior or the conducting of an activity.

- **Integrity:** The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

*What governs how you conduct yourself as an operator?*
Why Ethics Are Important

- **Protecting public health and the environment**
  - SDWA regulates the nation’s public drinking water supplies
  - SDWA authorizes the EPA to set health-based standards to protect against naturally occurring and man-made contaminants

- **Ensuring public trust**
  - Water systems are responsible for ensuring that appropriate samples are collected to comply with regulations
  - ADEQ depends on water systems for the integrity and quality of drinking water data received for compliance
Rule Relating to Ethics

- Proper operation of a facility and not falsifying records. (R18-5-109, B)
Certificates may be revoked, suspended or put on probation if an operator:

- Operates a facility in a manner that violates federal or state law
- Negligently operates a facility or negligently supervises the operation of a facility
- Endangers public health, safety or welfare
(Continued) Certificates may be revoked, suspended, or put on probation if an operator:

- Obtains, or attempts to obtain, a certificate by fraud, deceit or misrepresentation
- Engages in fraud, deceit or misrepresentation in the operation or supervision of a facility
- Knowingly or negligently prepares a false or fraudulent report or record regarding the operation or supervision of a facility
(Continued) Certificates may be revoked, suspended, or put on probation if an operator:

- Fails to comply with a Department order or order of a court
- Fails to comply with the terms or conditions of probation or suspension
- Fails to cooperate with an investigation by the Department including failing or refusing to provide information
What could happen to the certificates?

- Upon unethical actions, certificates can be
  - Revoked
  - Put on probation
  - Suspended
Submit accurate PDHs

Operator Certification Renewal Form

Your signature below certifies that the operator certification renewal form is correct and you have attended and completed all the training listed on the renewal form above. Understand that any falsification may subject the certificate(s) to denial, suspension, probation and/or revocation. (R18-5-109). Allow 30 days for processing.

The following must accompany this form:

- Renewal fee made payable to ADEQ; only form of accepted payment are Money Order, Check or Cash (R18-14-301). Cash must be exact change.
- Would you like to be subscribed to the Operator Certification List Serve? YES NO

Your signature below certifies that the operator certification renewal form is correct and you have attended and completed all the training listed on the renewal form above. Understand that any falsification may subject the certificate(s) to denial, suspension, probation and/or revocation. (R18-5-109). Allow 30 days for processing.
Submit accurate test scores
Drinking Water Data Reporting

- Fill out chain of custody sheet as sample is being taken so that data is accurate (date, time, location, site description, sample type, sample name)
- Make sure sampling equipment is calibrated correctly
- Don’t time travel
- Don’t use faulty info

If there is an issue with your data, contact your county assistance coordinator.
Case Study #1

- Told employees to erase evidence of positive test results
- Coliform testing samples were inappropriately recorded
- Indicted on felony charge:
  - On three years of probation
  - Legal fines
  - Community service
  - Noncompliance could lead to two years in prison
Case Study #2

- Altered water sample test results
- Time in jail and a fine
Case Study #3

- Submitted fabricated PDH credits to renew certificates
- Was audited by ADEQ
- Had to earn more PDH credits and resubmit renewal form
Dilemma #1

- You have not yet earned 30 PDHs to renew your certificates, and your certificates expire in one month.
Dilemma #1

- You have not yet earned 30 PDHs to renew your certificates, and your certificates expire in one month.
- Falsify PDHs and send in certification renewal form to ADEQ.
Dilemma #1

- You have not yet earned 30 PDHs to renew your certificates, and your certificates expire in one month.
- Contact ADEQ to find out what options there are. There may be trainings you can attend within the month, as well as some workbooks to complete to meet the required 30 PDHs.
Dilemma #2

- You did not pass a test that you needed to pass in order to be eligible for a promotion.
Dilemma #2

- You did not pass a test that you needed to pass in order to be eligible for a promotion.
- You decide to alter your Individual Mastery Report (test results) to show that you passed. You send that in with your form and fee for the new/upgraded certificate.
Dilemma #2

- You did not pass a test that you needed to pass in order to be eligible for a promotion.
- Do not submit your test score or new certificate form. Check what areas need to be studied most based on the mastery report, and take the test again when prepared.
- After testing for total coliform, you find that the sample tested positive.
Dilemma #3

- After testing for total coliform, you find that the sample tested positive.
- You throw away the sample and any evidence that showed it was positive. You rewrite the entire data sheet. You tell staff to follow suit.
Dilemma #3

- After testing for total coliform, you find that the sample tested positive.
- Keep the sample and all evidence that showed it was positive. It is recommended to contact ADEQ. If it was E. coli positive, it is required to contact ADEQ by the end of the day. Complete the repeat sampling that needs to be done.
Dilemma #4

- You forget to take a sample during your shift. What do you do?
Consequences

- Public safety is compromised
- Certificates revoked or suspended
- Losing employment
- Fines
- Prison
How do we stay ethical?

- **The ADEQ Way:**
  - Evaluate everything we do for its impact on the mission.
  - Hire only those who believe in our way and have a passion for their work.
  - Train those who cannot, replace those who will not, and promote those who excel.
  - Never hide a problem – respect others enough to be honest, even if the truth is uncomfortable.
  - Do not blame, but hold each other accountable.
(Continued) The ADEQ Way:

- Involve end users early and often when creating or improving services.
- Never stop asking why.
- Continuously design and redesign for quality and radical simplicity.
- Freely discuss, promptly decide, and totally commit.
- Do not fear failure.
Last Thoughts

- Integrity: It all rests on you
- Make good choices
Our mission is to protect and enhance public health and the environment in Arizona.

Questions?

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https://azdeq.gov/OperatorCertification