

REPORT OF RESULTS
FROM THE
DRINKING WATER SUPERVISION QUESTIONNAIRE

CONDUCTED DURING JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2006

MARCH 2006

ENGINEERING SECTION
DIVISION OF HEALTH
ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Engineering Section of the Division of Health of the Department of Health and Human Services administers a safe drinking water program and has primacy for the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. This program contains many elements all of which share the purpose of ensuring that the citizens of Arkansas have a safe and palatable water to drink. Many of these program elements are intended to directly assist the public water systems in complying with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The purpose of this survey was to receive input from the regulated community regarding the quality and helpfulness of these program elements. Generous opportunities were given for comments and suggestions regarding how this program could better meet their needs.

The survey questionnaire was mailed out to the administrative contacts that are contained in the public water system database maintained in the Engineering Section. The administrative contacts are typically the water manager of record for a water system. Since many water managers manage more than one system, the number of unique administrative contacts is less than the number of unique public water systems. In total, 575 questionnaires were mailed out on January 9, 2006. As of the writing of this report, 307 responses have been received constituting a 53 % response rate.

Appendix A to this report contains a copy of both the cover letter and the questionnaire that was mailed out.

In the sections that follow, each part of the questionnaire is presented with the results that were obtained. Every comment that was offered, is listed.

RESPONDANTS WATER SYSTEM TYPE AND REGION

Which best describes the source of water for your public water system? (303 responses)

17% Surface water, 49% Well water, 26% Purchased Surface Water, 7% Purchased Well Water

Which area of the State best describes the location of your public water system? (301 responses)

22% Northwest, 20% Northeast, 14% Southeast, 20% Southwest, 24% Central

PLAN REVIEW

PLAN REVIEW: The plan review function is considered one of the fundamental components of the State drinking water program and is required in order for the State to have primacy of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The primary goal of the plan review function is to set a minimum acceptable standard of construction and design so that the public health is protected.

- A. How would you rate the quality of the plan review function? 66% Good, 31% Adequate, 3% Poor. (302 responses)
- B. How would you rate the importance of the plan review function to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system? 68% Very Important, 28% Moderate Importance, 5% Minor Importance. (303 responses)
- C. How would you rate the timeliness of the plan review function? 21% Quick, 74% Adequate, 5% Slow. (300 responses)
- D. How would you rate the competence of the plan review engineers? 67% Knowledgeable, 32% Adequate, 1% Inadequate (301 responses)
- E. How would you rate the plan review engineers familiarity with your system and it's needs and problems? 42% Knowledgeable, 53% Adequate, 5% Inadequate (298 responses)

COMMENTS:

The plan review function is important. Some Private Engineers don't truly understand our systems and add things that are not necessary raising costs. My District Engineer, Jerry Saunders, is very knowledgeable of my system, because I have been honest and helpful to show him whats going on.

Everyone else wants to use our water system to control everyone else Reg. esp. the plumbing.

Robert Arthur is very knowledgeable and helpful to me when reviewing plans for our water system.

Have never used.

I feel that the review engineers know nothing about my system but if they use a standard for all installation this should be adequate. Our engineer knows what specific requirements is needed for our installations.

They have been helpful and informative with any questions or problems our water system has had.

Engineers that review other engineers plans could be improved by having contractors or superintendents with hands on experience input into the reality of being able to build a project as indicated on the blue prints.

Personal review time for each system would be good.

I have had no experience with plan review.

Noticed a lot of improvement in time of review/approval over the last 2 years.

Engineers can't get much better than adequate in my opinion.

The Engineering Department has been very helpful to me for my water system.

Plan Review play an important role in keeping things "In Check". I feel as though ADHHS Engineers take the extra step to Familiarize themselves w/our system and do a great job. They are also open to discussion about issues during plan review.

Very slow when trying to use this area. One time waited nine months on a 700 ft line and plans were lost they said.

C: Some times the job has started before & get my letter of approval. The plumber has to show me his letter.

I have a very small system and have used the plan review system only once.

Review process much too slow.

The only problem I see is that small water systems do not have funds as do larger water systems do. With only a limited it is our ??? Customers who ??? Us to pay for everything.

Roy Davis and Craig Corder are excellent and knowledgeable individuals. Roy Davis has helped me several times with good down to earth common sense solutions. Both these men are an asset to the water systems of NW Arkansas.

Very Knowledgeable - Please continue to give them the proper tools to do their job. The review function is very important, especially for medium and small systems that do not have review or planning departments.

Our engineers that we can get is very good about help us with problems and get them correct.

Plan review has improved of late in timeliness over prior years.

Very satisfied with our engineer in Little Rock, Mr. Roy Davis. Since he took over our area, we noticed a quicker turnaround time on receiving our approvals or comments. He should be commended fro this type of work.

OK

Plan review has helped minimize mistakes.

PRA: Getting better than before. PRC: Sometime take 30 to 60 days. PRComments: The reviewer frequently has comments and requirements that does not pertain to Health and Safety. Frequently make changes overruling systems eng.

COMPLIANCE SAMPLING

COMPLIANCE SAMPLING: The Engineering Section collects the majority of water samples required by the Safe Drinking Water Act and has them analyzed in our laboratories. The Engineering Section has dedicated staff that visits each water system at appropriate intervals so that required sampling times and frequencies are satisfied.

- A. How would you rate the quality of the compliance sampling and analysis function?
75% Good, 23% Adequate, 2% Unsatisfactory. (307 responses)
- B. How would you rate the importance of the compliance sampling function to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system? 88% Very Important, 11% Moderate Importance, 1% Minor Importance. (306 responses)
- C. How would you rate the demeanor and professionalism of the samplers that visit your system?
69% High, 29% Adequate, 2% Low. (301 responses)
- D. How would you rate the timeliness of the results from compliance sampling? 37% Fast, 58% Adequate, 5% Slow. (307 responses)

COMMENTS:

Very Polite

The old story of one leak out & too to sample gets old. If one fails, get one resample.

You should think about grooming standards and uniform standards. I think if you represent the Department of Health or any Government entity you should have a proper uniform dress code and grooming standard.

C: (never see), I think we are providing some unnecessary jobs at AHD. You are required to maintain chlorine residual but then you have haloacetic acids and trihalomethanes. You can have one or the other, you choose.

They usually give plenty of notice and I try to meet with them ASAP.
Sampler's need to check in before sampling and they need to get here during office hours, so they can check in or have a sample site plan as we do.

Better in depth explanations.

Some sample results have been high and re-samples show later to be fine but ADH only uses first pull without considering previous results could have been in error. We have collected back up samples at same time as ADH collects and set off to private lab for comparison. ADH sample results have been high compared to private certified lab results. I think when a result will trigger a violation, a back-up sample should be collected to verify. IT cost utilities a lot of money and time when a violation occurs.

Very good group and very helpful in every aspect of our water system.

C: Sampler never checks in w/compliance office. Visits are unknown.

They are easy to work with.

In the area of disinfection by products compliance there seems to be a large amount of problems from your staff.

C: I don't see them.

A system is only as good as the water they purchase - these tests should be used to improve the quality of water bought from the larger systems not to find the smaller systems out of compliance when they have no control over the water they buy.

The lab does not understand that this is not a perfect world. Not everything can go as planned.

Jeff Sohl is very knowledgeable and very helpful to our system. Jeff Sohl is an asset to the operations of the public water systems of NW Arkansas

Please continue to provide compliance (Bac-T) results via the internet. Expansion of internet results (and reporting) is always welcome.

They are very good about help you with your sample and problems that you have.

The people that visit our system are very professional.

It would be helpful for sample collectors to call ahead, so that the appropriate staff are available to take them to our plant.

I have asked questions to the people who sample the water and they don't have a clue about whats going on or how to test different samples.

C: Never met one.

Should call to set up time to meet to unlock facilities. Not just show up at quitting time.

Good bunch of guys.

CSC: Very unprofessional. CScomments: Have no time from us to where and when sample were collected.

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORTS

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORTS: The Engineering Section provides assistance in preparing the yearly Consumer Confidence Reports prior to mailing by the water system. The engineering section utilizes it's records of compliance sampling and analysis to perform this assistance.

- A. How would you rate the quality of the Consumer Confidence Report assistance?
83% Good, 16% Adequate, 1% Unsatisfactory. (301 responses)
- B. How would you rate the importance of the Consumer Confidence Report assistance to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system?
60% Very Important, 29% Moderate Importance, 11% Minor Importance. (301 responses)
- C. How would you rate the timeliness of the Consumer Confidence Report assistance?
60% Fast, 39% Adequate, 1 % Slow. (301 responses)

COMMENTS:

Maybe 5% of the people even look at the report - most calls we get about it are complaints about us leaving it taped to the door!

This is money shot to shit. No one reads or understands them.

The assistance provided by the Engineering Section has been very important. The classes were very well attended for the necessary instructions for this report. The instructor was very knowledgeable and always well prepared.

Great program

The CCR helped me in some areas of my operation. So its important in the daily operation of a water plant "It's a good program"

A waste of time and money. But I am thankful that the Health Dept. will do this service for us. Saves us lots of time and money, thank you.

This service is very helpful, especially for small systems. Keep up the good work.

I think that this report is of little importance to the average customer. Time and money could be better spent on more meaningful issues.

Jack Wilson does an exceptional job.

Your help with this document is one of the best ways to work with the systems in each techs area.

More class time for operators is necessary

Last year I was told to go ahead and run the CCR's in the news paper. After I paid the newspaper you rejected it. NPW was 500 extra dollars because of this.

Very Unprofessional

I seriously appreciate all the work you put into my CCR's. It has saved me a considerable amount of time. Thank you!!

Excellent staff, outstanding speed with getting reports done & back in our hands.

Consumer confidence Reports help is of the most important to us small water systems.

CCR being done in the same format at the State level for systems is a definite plus for those who wish to participate.

This group does a great job.

Assistance requests aren't sent to compliance office. We have to make a call to ADH to ask for assistance. Staff are fast at making our request happen.

Jack does a good job.

This service is a big help to small systems.

Very Important Assistance

A great program.

I think the State needs to consider different action on reporting CCR - We to this date have had no - none - not even a hint of anyone inquiring about the report. Further more, who can understand the results anyhow. As long as they know it is safe. I am just glad we don't have to bear the experience of a mail-out like some systems.

Up to last year, the Engineering Section provided water systems with a summary of analysis results required on the Consumer Confidence Report. This was very beneficial and strongly encourage this to be re-instated.

Very few people on our system even look at this.

I would like to preface this by stating that we are a small water system and our resources of revenue are already stressed. I have had comments from local water users questioning the expense incurred by the mailing and/or the printing in the paper of the CCR's. I think the method of reporting the CCR to the general public is a waste of money that could be used toward more needed uses. I believe that a simple statement printed in the local paper stating that the CCR is available for viewing at the water office would be adequate and more cost effective. The report could be posted at various establishments as well. A very small percentage of the population even know what they are looking at.

Most systems are familiar - maybe training for new systems managers only?

The staff in particular Jack Wilson has been very pro-active and professional. They have been a great asset to the system managers.

A small system such as _____ very much appreciates your help.

I do appreciate the assistance offered especially the help selecting the appropriate information to be included in the CCR.

Nobody pays attention to the CCR. They just want water to come out of their faucets when they turn them on.

We are very happy to have the help from Jack.

General opinion expressed is the CCR is a waste of time and money. Surely there is a more effective way to keep customers informed. 99% of peoples go into trash can unread.

It would be impossible for a small water system to complete this report without assistance from personnel within this section. We greatly appreciate your help with the consumer confidence report.

Extra expense with no benefit to system.

Great Service

Very good program in assisting water systems.

BACTERIOLOGICAL LABORATORY SUPPORT

BACTERIOLOGICAL LABORATORY SUPPORT: The Department of Health and Human Services provides a bacteriological laboratory that is used to analyze water samples for compliance with the Total Coliform Rule of the Safe Drinking Water Act. This laboratory is also used to analyze new construction samples and is available for public citizen use (with a charge) for analyzing private well samples. Also, personnel from this lab certify a few other bacteriological labs around the state that are operated by some of the larger public water systems.

- A. How would you rate the quality of the bacteriological laboratory service? 74% Good, 23% Adequate, 3% Unsatisfactory. (303 responses)
- B. How would you rate the importance of the bacteriological laboratory service to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system? 91% Very Important, 8% Moderate Importance, 1% Minor Importance. (303 responses)
- C. How would you rate the timeliness of the results from the bacteriological laboratory? 45% Fast, 45% Adequate, 10% Slow. (302 responses)
- D. How would you rate the helpfulness of the staff of the Engineering Section in assisting you in complying with Total Coliform Rule requirements? 85% Very Helpful, 14% Somewhat Helpful, 2% Not enough help. (300 responses)

COMMENTS:

Once we had 3 samples come back bad and it was a violation, we take on 3 samples, we re-sampled and they were O.K. I don't think we should have a violation for that.

No problem.

Bacti samples have the chlorine residual on them. Some small systems (like mine) do not have a Fax machine. It is a pain in the butt to fill out chlorine residual form, find a fax machine, & fax it when it is on bacti sample form.

Keep up the good work.

An office in NW Arkansas is needed. Too many samples are rejected.

We have had very helpful criticism and instruction from this department especially talking with Jay Northern.

Lab makes a mistake with samples but will not admit to it. Water system ends up having to resample & resample when there is no problem with actual water samples sent in. Water system ends up with violation on record when there was no actual violation. Bottom line - lab made a mistake! Period.

Results could be posted faster on the internet.

Don't understand that I can send all of my samples in at the same time and one came back too old. Back in Dec. 2005

Good.

Place the sample collection system in the lobby by the guard desk to save having to check in as visitor every time we deliver samples.

Maybe they test on time, who knows?

We have to carry our samples 20 miles each month to be picked up.

They do a great job.

Bact lab rated unsatisfactory because too many samples are rejected or otherwise unsatisfactory. Often this is due to lab error that could be avoided if the lab put in an effort.

Sometimes it takes two weeks to get results!

Place the sample collection desk in the lobby with the guard station.

System works very well for us.

Because of our location, we have to use the postal service to deliver our monthly water samples. Many times they arrive in the lab too late. I don't know the answer to this problem. We use priority mail to make it as quick as possible.

Extremely good service and assistance.

Same as previous comment. (The lab does not understand that this is not a perfect world. Not everything can go as planned.)

Hey, we want Bac-T results in < 48 hours - we can wish can't we? Honestly, faster bac-t results would be appreciated - posting to the internet is very helpful!

To many samples reject for too old.

There are times we send in samples and they sit there until they are too old. We send in 3 samples, 2 are too old 1- is good.

Lab is difficult to work with. Improvement is seen since 11-05.

Maybe they need more help.

Most time when calling for result cannot find anyone who know or cares - often will have to make 2 or 3 calls.

Laboratory staff that pick up samples after systems have hand delivered them and signed them in should be more careful to get all the samples delivered together picked up so that they don't get old. This requires systems to have to do second samples in the same month which is a waste of time and resources. This may not happen frequently but once a year is too much for systems with minimal personnel.

Web site w/results is very beneficial.

SANITARY SURVEYS

SANITARY SURVEYS: The Engineering Section has for many years, even predating the SDWA, conducted sanitary survey inspections of public water systems. This function is now required by the SDWA. The purpose of sanitary survey inspections is to identify sanitary hazards, document water system service areas and facilities, and to provide technical assistance to the water operator.

- A. How would you rate the quality of the sanitary survey inspections? 80% Good, 19% Adequate, 1% Unsatisfactory. (305 responses)
- B. How would you rate the importance of the sanitary survey inspections to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system? 69% Very Important, 27% Moderate Importance, 4% Minor Importance. (305 responses)
- C. How would you rate the demeanor, professionalism, and competence of the inspectors that visit your system? 76% High, 22% Adequate, 2% Low. (305 responses)
Comment: _____
- D. How often has the sanitary survey report been useful to you? 21% Very often, 65% Occasionally, 13% Rarely, 2% Never. (302 responses)

COMMENTS:

Jerry Saunders does mine (inspections) & very nice fellow. The improvements shown on this its helpful to the City Council

We are a small system not many customers.

Very attentive to detail oriented.

I have a very good engineer in my sanitary survey. He is usually very thorough. Marhsall is very good at his job.

Very good and helpful.

C: Craig Berger

The Sanitary Survey from the Health Dept. is the main tool I use for getting help from my City Council.

Last San. Survey that was conducted had many errors that had to be corrected by the operator. All errors were not corrected and remain on record. Sloppy Work!

A lot of the survey deals with costly items, that are nice, but not a necessity.

C: Robin Michaels does an excellent job.

My last survey was done one day before a holiday. I was scheduled to be off and had to come I for the survey. The engineer and assistant were about 5 hours later than the original agreed upon time. A large amount of the information could have been collected over the phone prior to the inspection. Survey Reports not very useful.

With this in hand, I can go to the Board and have no trouble getting done what needs to be.

Good program, good people

About 2 years ago, Glen Greenway and Clyde Little I think came over to our system. They pointed out several things that we need to correct. Both were real nice and helpful.

C: Very professional.

C: Steve Waldron is very professional, friendly individual. I have yet to call Steve and come away with an unanswered question. He is very helpful and provides our water system with expert advice.

C: Sanitary Surveys was not adequately updated w/correct administrative sections. No contact or copy sanitary survey sent o compliance office. Dist. Eng. Staff (Env. Spec) did not ask any questions from the Engineering Compliance office.

When you do a sanitary survey inspection your staff brings older equipment than ours to test the calibration on our chlorine analyzer. Instead of checking our equipment with yours, it should be checked with a known standard. If ours is not with yours then we get reprimanded.

New operator survey not due yet. Never had one.

Sometimes we (operators/managers) can't see the forest for the trees - sanitary surveys help us see again.

D: is not marked but used often. Gerald Saunders is very good at this.

We try to keep our system running professionally. With or Without the inspections. I realize some do not so therefore they are very necessary.

I think the sanitary survey is a good thing because it lets everybody know what needs to be done with your plant or system and how you are running it.

What inspector? Over the phone? Participated in one survey in the past over the telephone. Not in person.

This helps with getting new equip when needed.

In past years - inspectors fill out survey from office and never look at system - often never making correction after corrections have been made.

I regard it as part of my training and to familiarize me with different parts of the system.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: It has been the philosophy of the Engineering Section to place a priority on helping water systems comply with the SDWA rather than relying on enforcement after a violation has occurred. Our technical assistance efforts include: training schools, quarterly newsletters, on site assistance, complaint investigations, support of AWW & WEA conventions, training materials, and specialized technical help with regards to special rules such as the Disinfection By Product Rule, Surface Water Treatment Rule, Lead and Copper Rule, Comprehensive Performance Evaluations, Area Wide Optimization Program, and hosting AWWA teleconference sites, etc..

- A. How would you rate the quality of the technical assistance provided? 73% Good, 22% Adequate, 5% Unsatisfactory. (307 responses)
- B. How would you rate the importance of the technical assistance provided to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system? 79% Very Important, 19% Moderate Importance, 2% Minor Importance. (307 responses)
- C. How would you rate the demeanor, professionalism, and competence of the personnel that provide technical assistance to your system?
 - Attitude: 67% High, 29% Adequate, 4% Low. (305 responses)
 - Professionalism: 71% High, 25% Adequate, 3% Low (291 responses)
 - Politeness: 69% High, 29% Adequate, 2% Low (291 responses)
 - Competence: 71% High, 26% Adequate, 3% Low (291 responses)
- D. Please list any technical assistance that you would like to see provided or would like to see more of provided.

Comments:

Get operators to have time to discuss their problems & solutions and tips they have learned in the field.

Any time we have required assistance for the above technical assistance, the appropriate people in the departments have been more helpful. Please keep up the good work!

Don't want them back.

I would like the ADH to give water training schools in Northeast Arkansas instead of ARWA. ADH does a better job of it.

Technical assistance serves the purpose.

You need someone to be available. Sometimes it is hard to reach our District reps.

Our operator is very pleased.

Optional treatment methods to meet TOC, THM, & Haa5.

A more intense course on waterworks at the short schools. I've taken the basics too many times.

How to do more paperwork for water and wastewater operators.

A more direct answering of questions would be helpful.

Quarterly Report from Eng. Staff sent to compliance office.

More advance treatment classes.

Already a satisfied recipient.

More visits

With exception of Craig Burger. He would rate very low in every category.

I have appreciated the help with the CCR Report and would like to see it continue.

Being able to talk to someone the 1st time you call.

More hands on assistance in helping new operators in training guidance and help to get them on their feet when they have no prior experience.

More assistance provided on TTHMs and Haloacetic Acids, would like to get out of violation.

COMMENTS:

The schools are good but they need to try not to cover so much material, I see puzzled looks on some & (myself) faces, need to slow down until everyone understands the material better.

To have someone's help that has knowledge of a water system.

When you have classes at the conference that I attend, they are always too crowded, can't hear and not enough one on one instructions. As operators we go to learn but can't learn nothing in this setting. Please make the classes where we can actually learn something.

Attitude, Professionalism, etc, cannot be rated as a bulk item. Each of the technical assistance areas typically involve different Health Dept. personnel. Each has a personality strength and weakness which reflect directly with the areas of rating.

Steve Waldron is an asset to the AHD.

Some are great, others well, I'll leave it at that.

Very Good and Helpful.

More training at NW Arkansas sites.

It would be easier to train and study for the problems and questions in or water system if schools were closer to our area.

More hands-on class time.

We all still miss Ginger Tatom.

They couldn't care less about small systems like Strawberry, Portia. All resources are dedicated to big systems like Batesville, Pine Bluff.

Roy Davis has been very helpful to me.

ARWA is another very useful organization in the work in.

Engineering Supervisor has always provided high professionalism and competence with any of our needs.

Slow to respond in situations where you should be responding to protect public health. Also you should be the ones promoting and recommending for awards, systems who truly are doing a good job. You should know who these are.

It's the best.

The technical assistance we received from the AWW men was very good. It helped us solve our problem fast. They had all the answers to our questions and provided the equipment to test our water to find any problems. Keep up the good work.

Technical Assistance is first class! Our system has benefited greatly from the CPE & other technical assistance programs.

You have some real good people and you have some that don't know jack!!

Most time when I call and ask to speak to my Eng. He is either out smoking - gone to lunch from 10:00 to 2:00 - never knows what time he will be back in.

Steve Waldron has been a great help.

TAC: Rating includes all technical assistance. District staff alone would rate high in all areas.

PERSONNEL

PERSONNEL: The Engineering Section maintains a technical staff that provides the services and administrates the rules and regulations in our drinking water supervision program. This part of the questionnaire is intended to gain information from you concerning the level of competence, helpfulness, and demeanor of this staff.

- A. Do you consider the staff of the drinking water section to be competent relating to the Safe Drinking Water Act and the technical assistance attempting to be provided?
74% Very Competent, 25% Adequately Competent, 1% Not Competent. (304 responses)
- B. Do you consider the staff of the drinking water section to be knowledgeable with regards to how the rules and regulations impact water system operations? 71% Very Knowledgeable, 28% Adequately Knowledgeable, 1% Not Knowledgeable. (304 responses)
- C. Do you consider the staff of the drinking water section to be approachable when you are seeking information or need assistance?
- D. 67% Very Approachable, 32% Adequately Approachable, 1% Not Approachable (303 responses)
- E. Does the staff of the drinking water section conduct themselves in a polite, helpful, and professional manner? 83% Very, 13% Somewhat, 4% Adequately, 0.3% No (297 responses)

COMMENTS:

Sometimes you may not get to speak to who you want but that is reasonable. But everyone I've talked to has helped me or answered my questions.

Some are while others are not quite as approachable, same aspect applies as above.

I have met and talked with several people on different subjects and the Engineering Staff has always been very helpful and answered all my questions.

Most of the staff is adequate in all respects but some are arrogant and make you feel stupid when you have a question. If I call with a question and they are the only one available to ask, I don't speak to them and try to figure it out for myself or call back when I can speak to someone else.

Very Competent in the office, Not competent at all in the field. Conduct professional in the office, not in the field.

Any time we have needed help there has been someone to talk to answer our questions.

More technical assistance time in class room.

The staff at ADH has been very, very helpful to me and to the City. You couldn't find a better staff to help water operators and cities. A big thank you goes to Miss Robin Micheals

Anytime I've had a question, I have either gotten an appropriate answer on the spot or been told by the staff member that they would find the answer and get back to me. And they have.

Very rude, quick to be grouchy. Will not return calls, but very fast in threats with violations.

Hard to make phone contact with.

Typically call the Eng. Supervisor for any questions.

Steve Waldron is always very approachable and very competent. He is always a pleasure to deal with. He always has time to listen and advise.

All of the staff that I have had contact with are top shelf.

Give them a pat on the back, their the best.

I haven't met a bad one yet.

Good, helpful, concerned, competent, folks

Like I said earlier, some are very helpful and know what they are talking about and others don't know no more than I do.

Very knowledgeable yet too busy, not enough personnel.

Most are very helpful (but not all)

Every water system is different & every operator has different ways of meeting compliance issues which some staff members see differently. But most are very helpful.

See below comments.

LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION

LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION: The Engineering Section oversees the Water Operator Licensing Program through the Training and Certification program administered through the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services. In Arkansas each Public Water System is required to have operators that are properly Licensed Water Operators based on their systems requirements. This part of the questionnaire is intended to gain information from you concerning the Water Operator Licensing Program in Arkansas.

- A. As a potential water operator, how would you rate the application process for attaining a water license?
66% Good, 31% Adequate, 3% Unsatisfactory (291 responses)
- B. As a licensed water operator, how would you rate the renewal process for maintaining your license?
71% Good, 28% Adequate, 1% Unsatisfactory (296 responses)
- C. How would you rate the importance of mandatory training prior to sitting for an exam?
75% Very important, 23% Helpful, 1% Minor Importance, 1% Do not need
- D. How would you rate the demeanor, professionalism, and competence of the personnel that comprise the licensing and certification program?
Attitude: 61% High, 31% Adequate, 7% Low (300 responses)
Professionalism: 68% High, 26% Adequate, 5% Low (295 responses)
Politeness: 62% High, 31% Adequate, 7% Low (296 responses)
Competence: 68% High, 28% Adequate, 3% Low (295 responses)

COMMENTS:

Again, I think the program (schools) should have more operator input in how they run their system more time for operators & teachers of the schools to discuss their problems & solutions.

Martin Nutt

Martin Nutt has cost this state many good operators. He takes pride in the fact that so many good people fail their tests, instead of trying to help them. He is not very professional when it comes to this. This is the only bad mark on an otherwise good Health Department.

Would like to see a renewal process similar to ADEQ's wastewater renewal. A printed form that lists all technical seminars, etc. that the operator has registered for & attended during the renewal period.

The only complaint I have is a need to have more classes during the year that overlap and classes to home so overnight stay is not required.

B: NO COMMENT!

Need to help bring up the pay for City employees with license. Or help set up a pay scale for cities.

More training in NW Arkansas.

Too much required before new operators can sit for a test for license. Most systems do not have enough staff to send out for classroom work before testing. New Testing - fail rate is still way too high.

Closer attention needs to be paid to towns that don't have properly licensed operators. I know a town that doesn't have properly licensed operators and hasn't had any for several years. They don't seem to be trying to get them either. I have to purchase water from them!

I would like to see more training held in the Northeast part of the state, traveling has always been a problem for me. Long distances.

I had the occasion of testing for and passing intermediate water distribution, but because of the order of pre-request schools (applied water math) I couldn't get the license. I was informed I had a grace period of 30 days before the passed test expired. Under the circumstances and available schools (applied math) I was unable to make the 30 day dead line. My thoughts are more time should be given, especially when an individual live away from the main hub of schools and is the only qualified operator of a water system. But I will take part of the blame. If I wasn't smart enough to know the order of testing I need I'd do it until I do it correct.

More time should be spent on the math formulas, most students do not get all of the math.

I couldn't give you all high marks. I didn't want you to get fat headed!!

Sitting through renewal classes hearing the same things year after year does get old.

Excellent!

Look at passing rates of water exams. You've got operators that have been operating plants for years but can't upgrade because they can't pass the exam and still can operate a plant as good as anyone.

Arrogant and will not listen.

When I went to classes in Lonoke at ARWA. All personnel from the Health Department were helpful.

I am pleased with the availability of training in our area. I would like to see better cooperation between Texas and Arkansas on licensing and reciprocity since we deal with both states.

The Arkansas Rural Water Association is a great tool in the training program. They work well with the Department of Health.

Education/Training should be considered instead of mandatory training requirement.

VSS systems should be reclassified and their requirements lowered.

Too many classes to get license. Cost is prohibitive to send people to all classes req.

If a system is in the Southwest or Southeast and lives close enough to go to either and pay's dues in both, it seems to be a problem to verify the credit hours for license renewal.

The personnel who run this program needs some training in PR. The enforcement toward systems not using licensed operators need to be followed promptly making operators who are licensed more valuable and more in need.

Encourage operators to upgrade license to highest grade to increase number of more competent operators in the state. I think operators of small systems should be encouraged to upgrade to highest license.

It's hard to get enough hours for renewal. (Maybe you can provide refresher courses.)

We need training sites closer to our water system. The Southwest Section is forgotten.

As an older operator, I can safely say we have come a long way - much improved over 20 years ago.

Helped me a lot, thanks.

ARWA was very helpful and worked well with the ADH.

Licensing is important particularly for maintenance workers. The testing is perhaps overly difficult for the skill level required to perform the job...had many of these people been better at math or reading skills they could have gotten a better job.

B: Need more class room hours per year.

Need to try and schedule more of the Basic Classes. As we hire new people it take a long time to get them certified. Maybe have them in Little Rock once a month. This would be a central location for everyone and allow us get licenses quicker.

Educational opportunities are above normal due to staff involved with the licensing program, especially Mr. Nutt.

Consider exempting degreed applicants with math backgrounds from the basic requirements for licensing and certification.

LCB: Currently licensed.

They are not really better than everyone else!

We as operators have had to explain to the City officials the importance of keeping up our hours, by attending classes, for our license. We would like to suggest that maybe you could send them a newsletter explaining this to them.

The licensing & cert. program is adequate but the person in charge of this area for the Health Department is very arrogant and takes a wrong attitude towards helping promote one of the states most successful organizations in Arkansas when it comes to training and technical assistance, ARWA. It is a shame, his attitude towards ARWA. He recently changed the math formula sheet the day of an exam, after a 3 day program at ARWA, and did not inform ARWA staff or Director of these changes, nor did he inform Mr. Seifert ahead of time. It is understood that you can't please everyone at the same time, but he enjoys irritating people and groups of people. There are some very knowledgeable and concerned people in rural water systems and Mr. Nutt needs to acknowledge that. This is not a competition between AWW & WEA and ARWA. We have to work together. I could go on, but it would be pointless. Acknowledge the problem and deal with him.

GENERAL COMMENTS

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Some topics that would help would be ways and tips on controlling water loss, new products and actual showing proper ways of repairs, helpful information on customer complaints. The Health Department does a fine job & the schools (rural water) are OK. But it's the same information year after year. The math is hard to me because I don't use it very much. PSI reading and chlorine dosage problems are useful, and we don't treat our water. We buy it from Russellville. I need more information on operation and maintenance. How to keep my water safe and the equipment good condition. Maybe a short school for operators that only buy their water with no treatment involved - just O&M tips. Specifically on water loss. More information on fluoride test to check water for leak (to see if a sample you have taken is city water or spring water), meter testing, handouts to prove to customers their toilet hangs and is a way for unexplained water usage. Any information on keeping my water loss down would be helpful.

Remember one thing about water operators across Arkansas, we are not engineers. Help us cut our cost. Leave good water systems alone.

I believe that our Department of Health does a very fine job, and personally I wouldn't want it.

I feel like the ADH handles their dept. very well in most all areas of the dept.

Well run department with employees willing to help water systems.

Keep up the good work!

If it's not broke, do not repair.

We at _____ are happy-satisfied with all the services provided by the Arkansas Department of Health.

Generally, support overall is very good, but more localized support and training is badly needed in the NW Arkansas area. Improvements need to be made in your sampling process. Turn-around time and communications need to get better. Lots of samples are rejected for being "too old".

I carry a T4 & a D4 license. Old testing was better. Fail rate for new tests too high. Operators learn a lot more working in situations on water systems than sitting in a classroom.

I think the full program for the water operators is good, but the formulas in the advanced math need more time and explanation - How much of this is necessary and if so we need more help with it.

_____ water does our testing but we get the reports. I have answered all the questions to the best of my knowledge. Our drinking water is maybe the most important asset our community has and we appreciate all you do to keep us safe.

Overall, ADH personnel are very helpful and courteous. I appreciate being asked what I think of how the ADH does it's job.

Still don't like the meter fee. Getting a license should not be so difficult. Nutt's attitude is improving. Glad Skinner is gone.

In my opinion the Arkansas Dept. of Health and especially the Engineering Section is "Superior" and any and all contact that I have experienced with them has been very informative, extremely pleasant, highly knowledgeable. Professionalism in a government agency that is unmatched and run in a way that makes calling on you something to look forward to. My hat is off to your organization. I think you've got it right, 100%.

The Health Department of Ark is a very important body of government for Arkansas's water systems.

We are a small system and are very dependent on all of the services that the ADH does for us. We very much appreciate all of the help and support we receive from all of ADH employees. Thank you.

ADH-Eng. Division should be able to notify more than the Bacti water operator of correspondence, lab results, and inspections. I have to call ever so often & check on my compliance status. Eng. Supervisor has always gone above and beyond for our needs. Thanks.

I have not had any problems with the Department or its staff.

I would like to thank the Arkansas Dept. of Health & Human Services for all the help with my system in the past, & expect it to be just as helpful in the future.

Job well done: Dept of Engineering does a very good job in s.... Our water system. Maintains a safe quality drinking water for our community.

I've always been satisfied when we have a problem on our system that when I call for info. It's always there what I need.

Most ADH employees have a good working knowledge of how the rules and regs affect the operation of a water system and the problems of putting them into practice and running a system on a practical basis. I think it is important for new employees to gain practical experience (their training by tenured employees) before being put in the position of enforcing the rules and regulations.

Lead and Copper testing: I wonder why if your water system samples stay in compliance for several years or testing periods, Why don't they exempt that water system. CCR REPORT: I agree that the Health Dept. Assistance is vital to fill out the CCR Report and also agree that their help is invaluable. As afar as keeping the water system any safer, I am not convinced of that yet. Also, I want to say that the Health Dept. is doing overall a great job as far as I can tell.

When I call Health Department I always get help from someone there. Thank you.

Keep up the good work.

My comment is directed at Licensing and Certification. I was certified under the old system (open book). I feel that it is very hard to advance under the new system because the material is very hard to study. I don't feel that the study guides are adequate. It is impossible for someone to read theses thick manuals. Even in short schools there is no way to cram all the information. To much math is another issue. Most people that have been out of school or college for any length of time really have a problem with all their formulas.

I have been a licensed water operator for 11 years. I have never been let down by the Engineering Staff. I would like to thank you Mr. Seifert and your NW Arkansas staff for doing a fine job. I can't say enough about Roy Davis and Jeff Sohl. They are very helpful.

We are very fortunate in Arkansas to have the programs/services provided by the Dept. of Health especially laboratory services for on \$0.25 per service per month.

The Health Department staff does an excellent job in helping water systems with compliance and operation of our systems safely and economically. Keep up the good work. We could not do our jobs nearly as well without you.

In general I think that Arkansas Dept. of Health and Engineer and staff doesn't do a very great job.

Generally speaking, working with the DHHS I have found most of the staff very helpful and professional. If it were possible I would have one request and that would be that Bacteriology sample results paperwork could be discontinued due to the repetitiveness between system operator and the DHHS. Otherwise it would be nice to have the ability to send the information in by e-mail. Just a thought. Thanks again for all you all do at DHHS. It is very much appreciated.

I think it would be very helpful if the Mayor, Water Board members, City Council, etc. of all water systems could be sent information from ADH dealing with the fact of how important it is to have and retain good, knowledgeable, professional, people. I am afraid very few of the members have any idea of where their water comes from much less about bacteria, etc.

The Division of Health provides very valuable services in helping us maintain the integrity of this vital resource - our water. There is no practical way that we could provide the testing the interpretation of regulations, or the guidance to maintain our system without the relationship that we have with the Division of Health, and especially the Engineering Section.

Have always found Engineering extremely helpful, knowledgeable, and friendly. Our city appreciates your contributions and experience. Thank you.

My 2-cents worth: Overall, the Engineering Section at the Dept. of Health does a great job for all water systems. The staff is very knowledgeable and easy to work with. However, over the past 20 years I have seen a few problems. I feel there are not enough engineers reviewing plans and field personnel. I monitor their pay as well and if you want to keep good qualified personnel you must be competitive in paying wages. I feel the admin telephone staff in Little Rock needs training on answering the phone and in dealing with customers. Now the laboratory: NW Arkansas is booming and is in need of a "local" laboratory for samples. We are in need of quicker service for sample returns. We are willing to contribute to the addition of a lab in NW Arkansas. In conclusion: I commend Mr. Seifert and his staff in helping protect our water systems throughout Arkansas and for keeping our water operators trained and for helping new water operators achieve success. Best regards.

We think you are doing a good job in all the categories listed above. We greatly appreciate the consideration and help that you have given us. Keep up the good work.

The Dept. of Health and Human Services does a good overall job with the exception of a few bad attitudes at some staff toward rural water systems. I believe a lot of governing bodies across our state are realizing the need for a more regional concept that is a good thing. Just be careful how your staff approaches the politics of this issue. It is very sensitive and can't be forced on anyone or any group. Be careful. Work with everyone on resolving issues, not siding with those that will simply make your job easier. Stick to what you say are the criteria for the licensing committee selection process. APPLICATION DEADLINES!! Be fair about everything. Place yourselves in the shoes of those of us out here trying to satisfy our customers whether municipal or rural. Rural is a huge part of Arkansas and we can accomplish a whole lot collectively. Remember that.

Like the service approach and not the enforcement approach. Health Department doing the compliance monitoring, etc. is an excellent way to run the water program. More time needs to be allotted to service. Perhaps more Districts would help in this area.

As a trainee working under someone else's lic. I do not feel I could judge the competence of the staff.

APPENDIX A



**Arkansas Department
of Health and Human Services
Division of Health**



Paul K. Halverson, DrPH, Director

Engineering Section – Environmental Health Branch – Center for Local Public Health

Postal Address	P. O. Box 1437, Slot H-37	Little Rock, AR 72203-1437	1-501-661-2623	TDD: 1-800-234-4333
Physical Address for UPS or Fedex	4815 West Markham St., Slot H-37	Little Rock, AR 72205	1-501-661-2623	Fax: 1-501-661-2623

January 9, 2006

RE: Drinking Water Supervision Questionnaire

Dear Water System Manager:

Please find enclosed an anonymous questionnaire regarding the services that the Engineering Section of the Department of Health and Human Services provides to the Public Water Systems in the State of Arkansas. This questionnaire is being sent out in an effort to provide Engineering Section Management with information they can use to improve the program and provide better services and quality of services to the public water systems.

We would appreciate your completion of this questionnaire and returning it via the return envelope provided. We encourage using the comment sections to provide other information that might be of help to us in improving this program.

This questionnaire should require no more than one half hour to complete. I would appreciate the questionnaire being completed and returned no later than February 28, 2006. The results will be compiled into a report which will be used by management to adjust the program to better meet water system needs. Also, an article summarizing the results will appear in a future edition of the Arkansas Drinking Water Update newsletter.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Harold Seifert, P.E.
Engineering Section
Division of Health
Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services

DRINKING WATER SUPERVISION QUESTIONNAIRE

The Engineering Section of the Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for the Drinking Water Supervision Program. This program is involved in many areas of water supply operations and regulations. This anonymous questionnaire is meant to gather information from the regulated water systems concerning the quality of the services that we offer. Each section provides areas for comments to be provided and such comments are encouraged. Although this questionnaire is anonymous, it would be helpful to know what type of system and water region of the State the respondent is from so that we can better match up needs with different areas.

Which best describes the source of water for your public water system?

Surface water, Well water, Purchased Surface Water, Purchased Well Water

Which area of the State best describes the location of your public water system?

Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, Southwest, Central

PLAN REVIEW: The plan review function is considered one of the fundamental components of the State drinking water program and is required in order for the State to have primacy of the Safe Drinking Water Act. The primary goal of the plan review function is to set a minimum acceptable standard of construction and design so that the public health is protected.

- F. How would you rate the quality of the plan review function? Good, Adequate, Poor.
- G. How would you rate the importance of the plan review function to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system? Very Important, Moderate Importance, Minor Importance.
- H. How would you rate the timeliness of the plan review function? Quick, Adequate, Slow.
- I. How would you rate the competence of the plan review engineers? Knowledgeable, Adequate, Inadequate
- J. How would you rate the plan review engineers familiarity with your system and it's needs and problems? Knowledgeable, Adequate, Inadequate

COMMENTS:

COMPLIANCE SAMPLING: The Engineering Section collects the majority of water samples required by the Safe Drinking Water Act and has them analyzed in our laboratories. The Engineering Section has dedicated staff that visits each water system at appropriate intervals so that required sampling times and frequencies are satisfied.

- E. How would you rate the quality of the compliance sampling and analysis function? Good, Adequate, Unsatisfactory.
- F. How would you rate the importance of the compliance sampling function to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system? Very Important, Moderate Importance, Minor Importance.
- G. How would you rate the demeanor and professionalism of the samplers that visit your system? High, Adequate, Low.
- H. How would you rate the timeliness of the results from compliance sampling? Fast, Adequate, Slow.

COMMENTS:

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORTS: The Engineering Section provides assistance in preparing the yearly Consumer Confidence Reports prior to mailing by the water system. The engineering section utilizes it's records of compliance sampling and analysis to perform this assistance.

- D. How would you rate the quality of the Consumer Confidence Report assistance?
____ Good, ____ Adequate, ____ Unsatisfactory.
- E. How would you rate the importance of the Consumer Confidence Report assistance to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system?
____ Very Important, ____ Moderate Importance, ____ Minor Importance.
- F. How would you rate the timeliness of the Consumer Confidence Report assistance?
____ Fast, ____ Adequate, ____ Slow.

COMMENTS:

BACTERIOLOGICAL LABORATORY SUPPORT: The Department of Health and Human Services provides a bacteriological laboratory that is used to analyze water samples for compliance with the Total Coliform Rule of the Safe Drinking Water Act. This laboratory is also used to analyze new construction samples and is available for public citizen use (with a charge) for analyzing private well samples. Also, personnel from this lab certify a few other bacteriological labs around the state that are operated by some of the larger public water systems.

- E. How would you rate the quality of the bacteriological laboratory service? ____ Good, ____ Adequate, ____ Unsatisfactory.
- F. How would you rate the importance of the bacteriological laboratory service to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system?
____ Very Important, ____ Moderate Importance, ____ Minor Importance.
- G. How would you rate the timeliness of the results from the bacteriological laboratory?
____ Fast, ____ Adequate, ____ Slow.
- H. How would you rate the helpfulness of the staff of the Engineering Section in assisting you in complying with Total Coliform Rule requirements? ____ Very Helpful, ____ Somewhat Helpful, ____ Not enough help.

COMMENTS:

SANITARY SURVEYS: The Engineering Section has for many years, even predating the SDWA, conducted sanitary survey inspections of public water systems. This function is now required by the SDWA. The purpose of sanitary survey inspections is to identify sanitary hazards, document water system service areas and facilities, and to provide technical assistance to the water operator.

- E. How would you rate the quality of the sanitary survey inspections? ____ Good, ____ Adequate, ____ Unsatisfactory.
- F. How would you rate the importance of the sanitary survey inspections to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system? ____ Very Important, ____ Moderate Importance, ____ Minor Importance.
- G. How would you rate the demeanor, professionalism, and competence of the inspectors that visit your system? ____ High, ____ Adequate, ____ Low.
Comment: _____
- H. How often has the sanitary survey report been useful to you? ____ Very often, ____ Occasionally, ____ Rarely, ____ Never.

COMMENTS:

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: It has been the philosophy of the Engineering Section to place a priority on helping water systems comply with the SDWA rather than relying on enforcement after a violation has occurred. Our technical assistance efforts include: training schools, quarterly newsletters, on site assistance, complaint investigations, support of AWW & WEA conventions, training materials, and specialized technical help with regards to special rules such as the Disinfection By Product Rule, Surface Water Treatment Rule, Lead and Copper Rule, Comprehensive Performance Evaluations, Area Wide Optimization Program, and hosting AWWA teleconference sites, etc..

- E. How would you rate the quality of the technical assistance provided? ____ Good, ____ Adequate, ____ Unsatisfactory.
- F. How would you rate the importance of the technical assistance provided to helping you meet your goals of operating and maintaining a safe public water system? ____ Very Important, ____ Moderate Importance, ____ Minor Importance.
- G. How would you rate the demeanor, professionalism, and competence of the personnel that provide technical assistance to your system?
Attitude: ____ High, ____ Adequate, ____ Low.
Professionalism: ____ High ____ Adequate ____ Low
Politeness: ____ High ____ Adequate ____ Low
Competence: ____ High ____ Adequate ____ Low
- H. Please list any technical assistance that you would like to see provided or would like to see more of provided.

COMMENTS:

PERSONNEL: The Engineering Section maintains a technical staff that provides the services and administrates the rules and regulations in our drinking water supervision program. This part of the questionnaire is intended to gain information from you concerning the level of competence, helpfulness, and demeanor of this staff.

- F. Do you consider the staff of the drinking water section to be competent relating to the Safe Drinking Water Act and the technical assistance attempting to be provided?
_____ Very Competent, _____ Adequately Competent, _____ Not Competent.
- G. Do you consider the staff of the drinking water section to be knowledgeable with regards to how the rules and regulations impact water system operations? _____ Very Knowledgeable, _____ Adequately Knowledgeable, _____ Not Knowledgeable.
- H. Do you consider the staff of the drinking water section to be approachable when you are seeking information or need assistance?
- I. _____ Very Approachable, _____ Adequately Approachable, _____ Not Approachable
- J. Does the staff of the drinking water section conduct themselves in a polite, helpful, and professional manner? _____ Very, _____ Somewhat, _____ Adequately, _____ No

COMMENTS:

LICENSING AND CERTIFICATION: The Engineering Section oversees the Water Operator Licensing Program through the Training and Certification program administered through the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services. In Arkansas each Public Water System is required to have operators that are properly Licensed Water Operators based on their systems requirements. This part of the questionnaire is intended to gain information from you concerning the Water Operator Licensing Program in Arkansas.

- E. As a potential water operator, how would you rate the application process for attaining a water license?
_____ Good, _____ Adequate, _____ Unsatisfactory
- F. As a licensed water operator, how would you rate the renewal process for maintaining your license?
_____ Good, _____ Adequate, _____ Unsatisfactory
- G. How would you rate the importance of mandatory training prior to sitting for an exam?
_____ Very important, _____ Helpful, _____ Minor Importance, _____ Do not need
- H. How would you rate the demeanor, professionalism, and competence of the personnel that comprise the licensing and certification program?
Attitude: _____ High, _____ Adequate, _____ Low
Professionalism: _____ High, _____ Adequate, _____ Low
Politeness: _____ High, _____ Adequate, _____ Low
Competence: _____ High, _____ Adequate, _____ Low

COMMENTS:
