UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Prairie Research Institute
Illinois State Water Survey
2204 Griffith Drive, MC-674
Champaign, IL 61820

Training Name: 2025 Virtual Operator Conference
Dates: February 4-6, 2025
Times: 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Central
Format: Four 1-hour workshops each day
Registration Link: https://event.gotowebinar.com/event/eca793db-491b-4bb5-b589-bfba2fc41c81

Primary Contact:

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Sponsors:
Illinois State Water Survey - The Illinois State Water Survey (ISWS) is a division of the Prairie Research Institute at the University of Illinois. The Water Survey's scientists conduct state-of-the-art research and collect, analyze, archive, and disseminate high-quality, objective data and technical information. The Water Survey's data, services, and expertise provide a sound technical basis for the people and policymakers of Illinois to make decisions.

Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) - The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) is a national network of non-profit partners working to provide technical assistance, training, resources, and support to rural communities across every state, the U.S. territories, and tribal lands. Through RCAP's regional partners, more than 350 technical assistance providers (TAPs) build long-term, trusted relationships with thousands of communities across the country.

Training Description:
This virtual training conference offers drinking water operators a chance to learn more about timely topics, improve fundamental skills, and get support for specific challenges while earning CEU credit to maintain their license. While there is no substitute for in-person training, this virtual event was created to specifically target operators of small and rural public water systems who may not have the means or ability to travel. Conference instructors are technical assistance providers from the RCAP network. The event is funded by a grant from the U.S. EPA for technical assistance and training of water operators.

Agenda:

Day 1: February 4, 2025

10:30 a.m. CST	**Opening Welcome**
10:45 a.m. CST	**Maintaining Sampling Requirements and Schedules In A Community Well System** *Bill Beasley, SERCAP*
	This presentation will review sources and methods available to operators to assist in maintaining the specific sampling requirements and associated schedules for small community wells systems.
	Bill Beasley is a recent addition to the SERCAP team. With over 25 years in the printing industry, Bill excelled in areas such as estimating, production planning, and management. Since 2017, he has shifted his expertise to the water treatment sector, gaining experience in conventional, ultra-filtration and green sand filtration processes. His primary focus has been on smaller community groundwater systems, encompassing treatment, filtration, distribution, and bulk storage. Bill also holds a Class 3 Water Treatment License from the state of Virginia.
11:45 a.m. CST	Break
11:55 a.m. CST	**Using Excel for Compliance Reports** *Jesse LaVigne, RCAP Solutions*
	This presentation will introduce Excel as a tool for drinking water compliance. Through a series of modules, attendees will get more comfortable interacting with Excel, become more comfortable with what Excel can do to solve immediate problems, and be inspired to see how Excel can build a foundation for long-term compliance solutions. This course is geared towards beginners, but relevant advanced worksheet features will be demonstrated.
	Jesse LaVigne joined RCAP Solutions in April 2024 after working as a water plant operator and technical lead for a public water system near Philadelphia. His focus was GIS systems integration and workflow development. He has also worked extensively in data logging automation and spearheaded the lead service line identification team. Before working in public water, Jesse served as an adjunct professor teaching video game design and development for Wilmington University in Delaware. He also designed custom software and games for Heavy Key Studios. Education: B.A. in Sociology from Wheaton College and B.S. in Video Game Design & Development Wilmington University.
12:55 p.m. CST	Break
1:05 p.m CST	**Water Quality Monitoring and Testing** *Beth Read, RCAC*

	This presentation will provide an overview of common water quality tests, why they matter, and how regulatory agencies fit in. Correct bacteriological testing collection techniques and concerns will also be discussed.
	Beth Read joined RCAC in 2021 and helps provide rural communities and tribes with technical assistance and training to stay in or return to regulatory compliance. She previously owned an environmental laboratory and worked with various entities to increase their understanding of the necessity of testing for health and safety reasons and to maintain compliance through testing.
2:05 p.m. CST	Break
2:15 p.m. CST	**Understanding Water Loss** *Britton Howe, CU*
	This presentation will help you understand water loss categories, promote accurate recording, explore actions against water loss, and how the data collected has many uses. The information within the slideshow is designed to inform students of all things water loss, and a few moments on what water loss is not.
	Britton Howe entered the water industry in 2013 and holds Class A Water, Class II Wastewater Collections, and Class C Wastewater Treatment certifications.
3:15 p.m. CST	**Closing Reminders**

Day 2: February 5, 2025

10:30 a.m. CST	**Opening Welcome**
10:45 a.m. CST	**Fundamentals of Cybersecurity** *Caroline E. Wilson, MSCS, RCAP Solutions*
	Dive into the world of cybersecurity with "Fundamentals of Cybersecurity", where we peel back the layers of theory to reveal the real-world consequences of cyber threats. We break down essential concepts and best practices while showcasing actual incidents that have rocked communities like yours. With relatable examples and insightful analysis, you'll discover what could have been done to prevent these incidents and what steps should have been taken in response. Get ready to empower yourself with knowledge and be proactive against cyber threats!
	Meet Caroline Wilson, a dedicated systems analyst at RCAP Solutions with a rich background in technology. After spending a decade in retail tech, she took a bold step during the pandemic to turn her passion into a career. Armed with a Bachelor's Degree in Information Security and a Master's Degree in Cyber Security and IT Management from Southern New Hampshire University, Caroline is on a mission to innovate and safeguard users from the growing threats of technology.

	Her love for puzzles and critical thinking drives her daily as she tackles complex challenges and develops solutions that protect and empower users at every skill level. Caroline's commitment to her work goes beyond just the technical aspects—she genuinely enjoys helping others navigate the digital landscape safely. *Grateful for her journey, Caroline is excited about using her expertise to make a difference in her community. Her work isn't just about systems; it's about building a safer community through technological innovation and development. Whether it's through mentoring or providing essential insights into cybersecurity, she's here to make technology work for everyone.*
11:45 a.m. CST	Break
11:55 a.m. CST	**Effective Contingency Planning** *Faymon Roberts, GLCAP*
	This presentation will provide a summary of how to effectively address a contingency plan in regards to Operations and Management of a water system.
	Faymon Roberts has held the position of Chief Operator for both water and sewer systems in numerous small communities in Ohio. Additionally, he has worked as a Village Administrator. Faymon has been with Ohio RCAP for 2 years and possesses extensive experience in water and sewer operations, maintenance, and management.
12:55 p.m. CST	Break
1:05 p.m CST	**Chlorine & Chlorine Meters** *Brian Day, MAP*
	Chlorine is a powerful chemical that has been used for over a century for various purposes. Its primary role is to disinfect water, effectively killing or inactivating harmful bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens that can pose serious health risks. The importance of chlorine in ensuring safe drinking water cannot be overstated; it has played a pivotal role in reducing waterborne diseases and improving public health outcomes worldwide. However, while chlorine is essential for disinfection, it is equally important to monitor its levels accurately. This is where chlorine meters come into play. These specialized devices allow us to measure the concentration of chlorine in water, ensuring that it remains within safe and effective limits. Too little chlorine can lead to insufficient disinfection, while too much can result in harmful byproducts and adverse health effects. In this presentation, we will explore the chemistry of chlorine, its various applications, and the critical role of chlorine meters in maintaining water quality and their operational principles. By the end of this session, you will have a comprehensive understanding of how chlorine and chlorine meters work together to safeguard our health and the environment.
	Brian Day has over fourteen years of experience in project management, water and wastewater, planning, and community and economic development in rural communities in the United States and overseas. He has significant experience in

	administration, project management, budgeting, entrepreneurship, business planning, spreadsheet evaluation, and grant writing. Brian was a former employee of the Illinois RCAP. He assisted rural communities with CDAP grants and USDA Rural Development loans. Before joining MAP, Brian was a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Dominican Republic. He was able to assist a community in the implementation of a water filter project that provided 50 houses and their neighbors (600+ persons) with free, clean, safe, potable water for drinking, cooking, bathing, and washing. Since 2015, he has been providing technical assistance to rural communities and tribal nations in North Dakota. His background and focus on water and wastewater issues have led him to several opportunities to help communities and tribal nations to operate competently in these ever-evolving industries. He strives to bring 100% to the work that he does, and his goal is to build strong, long-term, beneficial outcomes for his clients. He has a M.A. in Economics and a Post Baccalaureate Certificate in Community Development from Western Illinois University.
2:05 p.m. CST	Break
2:15 p.m. CST	**PFAS - Where are we now?** *John Poteat, SERCAP*
	A presentation on navigating the PFAS landscape with focus on health concerns and regulatory futures.
	John Poteat serves as the State Lead for SERCAP North Carolina, specializing in water and wastewater management. He collaborates with homeowners, business owners, and local municipalities to ensure their wastewater treatment, water treatment, and distribution systems operate effectively, efficiently, and within budget. With 25 years of experience as the Public Works Director for the Town of Pittsboro, North Carolina, John is adept at bridging the gap between public and private interests. He brings over 40 years of expertise in the Public Works and Utilities field. *A passionate advocate for accessible utilities, John is actively involved in the community. He is a member of Water For People, the Water Environment Federation, and NC-AWWA, where he serves on the Board of Directors as the Wastewater representative. John holds certifications in Subsurface Irrigation, Surface Irrigation, OSHA, C-Well Water Treatment, Grade A Distribution, and Grade 4 certifications in both Wastewater Treatment and Collections. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from North Carolina Central University with a B.S. in Public Administration and is a 2005 alumnus of the University of North Carolina's Municipal County Administration program.*
3:15 p.m. CST	**Closing Reminders**

Day 3: February 6, 2025

10:30 a.m. CST	**Opening Welcome**
10:45 a.m. CST	**Backflow for the Small Town** *Marty Ostransky, MAP*
	This presentation covers the aspects of a cross connection control program in a small town. It covers the topics of local ordinance, public education, surveying and inspection, requiring installation, testing and record-keeping and having a tester on staff.
	Marty Ostransky has over 4 years of experience as a water and wastewater operator for the Village of Cody in Nebraska. He is knowledgeable in water and onsite/decentralized wastewater systems. He possesses licensing in Grade 2 Water Operator, Grade 6 Backflow, and Grade 1 Wastewater. He educates operators in Nebraska by offering classes through MAP and Central Community College. These classes, which cover Water Disinfection, Backflow Recertification, and Wastewater, are eligible for continuing education hours. *Marty's education includes an Associate's Degree in Diesel Technology from Southeast Community College, Milford, NE, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management from the University of Nebraska in Kearney. His education and experience are a valuable asset to the small communities of Nebraska.*
11:45 a.m. CST	Break
11:55 a.m. CST	**Distribution System and Water Quality** *Shawnee Ford, GLCAP*
	This presentation will help identify what water quality parameters are telling you about the condition of your distribution system and the water quality. You will learn how to apply key factors for maintaining water quality throughout your distribution system.
	Shawnee Ford has worked extensively with a diverse range of organizations, including the state of Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources, the Environmental Protection Agency and Indian Health Services. Shawnee Ford is an accomplished Certified Water and Wastewater Operator with ample experience in maintaining and operating water and wastewater systems. Shawnee Ford holds drinking water certifications in Distribution Grade 1, Groundwater Grade 1, and Surface Water Grade 1. Wastewater certifications include Biological Solids/Sludge Handling, Processing and Reuse-Basic, Biological Treatment: Suspended Growth Processes-Basic, Disinfection-Basic, Nutrient Removal: Total Phosphorus-Basic, and Solids Separation-Basic.
12:55 p.m. CST	Break
1:05 p.m CST	**Leak Detection Methods** *Lucas Guinn, CU*

	This presentation will include several different leak detection methods. Including visual inspections, acoustic sensors/listening devices, leak detection dyes, and the importance of meter reading.
	Lucas Guinn, Community Environmental Management Advisor, joined Communities Unlimited in April of 2022, after working 18 years for Westville Utility Authority and 2 years working for Oklahoma Rural Water Association as a water circuit rider. He is a Certified Water and Wastewater Operator licensed by the State of Oklahoma, and a Certified Waterworks and Wastewater Works Lab Operator.
2:05 p.m. CST	Break
2:15 p.m. CST	**How to Create a Flushing Program** *Mario Casillas, RCAC*
	This presentation focuses on the importance of flushing in maintaining water quality. A well planned and systematically executed flushing program can decrease water age in dead ends of a distribution system, restore chlorine residuals, remove sediments and other deposits, and result in overall improvement of water quality.
	Mario Casillas graduated from Northern Arizona University and water has been the focus of his education and career development. As an ADEQ regulator he worked on water rights issues, surface/ source water protection, and drinking water regulation/ compliance. He has been a certified operator since 2014 and has provided consultation and remote operator services to small rural communities in Arizona. *He has been a member of RCAC since 2020 and has used his years of experience to assist rural and tribal communities in Arizona with asset management, financial planning, accessing funding, and direct technical assistance. Mario is currently the Assistant to the Regional Manager of the Circuit Rider team. When not talking about water, he likes to cook, garden, spend time with his kids, and watch baseball. Go Dodgers!*
3:15 p.m. CST	**Closing Reminders**

Participation Verification:

In addition to the methods lists below for contact hour calculation, participants must self-certify their identity by consenting to the following language at registration:

> *I consent to sharing my information with WaterOperator.org and to receiving communications about this event and other programs. I understand that my participation and engagement in the event will be monitored for the purposes of determining eligibility and number of hours for a certificate to be provided upon request. I certify that only I, the registrant, will log in using my unique registration link and will participate in an environment conducive for learning.*

Contact Hour Calculation:
Calculation of hours earned will be based on attendance start and end time, active participation in polls presented during each presentation, and completion of an end-of-day survey.

Certificate Issuance:
Certificates will be issued within 2 weeks of the conference's conclusion and be in 1-hour increments, for up to 12 hours, or as otherwise required.

Questions and Feedback:
Written comments and questions during each presentation will be facilitated by a moderator.

Technical Support:
An individual who is not the moderator will monitor the appropriate inbox for any related technical support queries.

Computer-Based Education:
The 2025 Virtual Conference is free and department personnel may register at: TBD

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