

**MANUAL FOR APPROVING COURSEWORK
FOR
WATER WELL CONTRACTORS**

**For the
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Water Well Contractors Program**

August 26, 2005

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of requiring coursework for licensure and continuing education for license renewal of water well contractors is to encourage the dissemination of information on current and new well construction techniques, business practices, and water well permitting and construction rules. This document establishes the standards and criteria for the Administrator, the Course Providers, the instructors, approved coursework and students. Approved coursework shall be required for water well contractors licensure and license renewal.

2. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Administrator" means the entity awarded a contract by competitive bid by the Department to provide the services listed herein and in the contract.
- B. "Approved Coursework" means Administrator or Department-approved continuing education units required for licensure and license renewal. Approval of coursework shall be accomplished in accordance with this Manual, which may be obtained by writing to the Department of Environmental Protection, Mail Station 3575, 2600 Blair Stone Road, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-2400. Approved coursework will be offered beginning December 1, 2003.
- C. "Continuing Education Unit" means one hour (at least fifty minutes of training or instruction). It may be abbreviated to "CEU" in this manual.
- D. "Course Provider" means a person or legal entity, such as a private or public university, vocational school, water management district, well construction industry school, or a recognized chapter of a professional association, approved by the Administrator or Department to provide approved coursework training or instruction.
- E. "Coursework Hour" means one hour (at least fifty minutes of training or instruction).
- F. "Department" means the Department of Environmental Protection.
- G. "Instructor" means a person who has been approved by the Administrator or the Department and who teaches or otherwise instructs approved coursework.
- H. "Water Management District" means the Northwest Florida Water Management District, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, the South Florida Water Management District, the St. Johns River Water Management District, or the Suwannee River Water Management District.
- I. "Student" means an individual who attends approved coursework for water well contractor licensure or license renewal.
- J. "Certificate of Attendance" means documentation issued to a student for completing approved coursework.
- K. "Certificate of Completion" means documentation issued by the Administrator to a student signifying earned credit for completion of 12 hours of approved coursework.

3. STANDARDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT

- A. The Department shall approve or deny all applications from the Administrator to be a Course Provider or for coursework approval within 30 days from receipt. Such

action by the Department shall be subject to the administrative hearing provisions of sections 120.569 and 120.57, F.S.

- B. The Department will review decisions by the Administrator for approval or denial of an application for Course Provider or coursework approval if requested by an applicant. The Department must approve or deny any appealed decision of an application for course provider or coursework approval in accordance with the provisions in section 120.60, F.S. Such action by the Department shall be subject to the administrative hearing provisions of sections 120.569 and 120.57, F.S.
- C. The Department may review completed post-coursework evaluation forms submitted by the Course Provider as necessary to ensure coursework quality control.
- D. The Department may perform audits of the Administrator, the Course Providers, and approved coursework classes as necessary to ensure program quality control.

4. STANDARDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

- A. The Administrator must meet the following minimum requirements:
 - 1) A minimum of 3 years working experience with expertise in the water well construction industry,
 - 2) Is a non-profit organization that has been in existence for a minimum of three years and is based in Florida, or
 - 3) Is a non-profit educational institution that has been in existence for a minimum of three years, is based in Florida and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and
 - 4) Is able to competently administer the responsibilities of Administrator identified in B. through O. below.
- B. The Administrator must approve or deny all applications to be a Course Provider or for coursework approval within 30 days from receipt. If denied, the applicant may appeal the decision to the Department.
- C. The Administrator shall maintain a Website of approved coursework availability with updates to be posted within four business days after approval of coursework. The Administrator shall also provide notice of approved coursework availability to the Department and Water Management Districts. The Administrator will be responsible for the content of the Website, registering the domain name, and securing a Website host service for the Website. The Website will contain several linked pages allowing visitors to view the Water Well Contractor's CEU program requirements with reference to the Department's Chapter 62-531, F.A.C., and Section 373.323, F.S., authorizing the mandatory CEU program. Other pages will list upcoming coursework availability including date, time and location, along with a description of the coursework to be offered, a listing of Water Well Contractors and their current CEU status updated quarterly and links to other industry and governmental related Websites.
- D. The Administrator shall provide notice to all Water Well Contractors, through a newsletter that is mailed to each contractor's last known address, of how to access the availability of approved coursework.
- E. The Administrator shall provide the Water Management Districts and Department with access to student attendance and approved coursework credit hour records.

- F. The Administrator will develop a custom database to record and track Water Well Contractor earned coursework hours or CEU credits. The database will include the following fields: license number, name, address, district in which they are licensed, the type of coursework and CEU hours earned (rules or business/safety), and a field showing the total number of earned coursework or CEU credits. The database will be provided to the Water Management Districts and the Department in electronic form that can be sorted by license number or name to view each license holder's total number of coursework/CEU hours accumulated during the preceding two-year license renewal period.
- G. The Administrator shall provide the Department by each September 30 with a compilation of direct and indirect costs and gross revenues for the operation of the program of approved coursework for water well contractor licensure and license renewal. After a review of the compilation, if deficiencies are found the Department will mail notice to the Administrator listing the deficiencies and what corrective action is required of the Administrator. If noted deficiencies are not corrected within a reasonable time as stated in the letter, the Contract shall be suspended until the deficiencies are corrected. The Department reserves the right to audit the Administrator with or without prior notice.
- H. The Administrator shall audit and evaluate Course Providers and approved coursework classes for quality, content, consistency, completeness, and effectiveness. The audit and evaluation shall include the review of student completed post-approved coursework evaluation forms submitted by the Course Provider.
- I. The Administrator shall have the right to charge fees to recover costs it may incur to implement a program to provide approved coursework to persons seeking water well contractor licensure and license renewal pursuant to Chapter 62-531, F.A.C.
- J. Approximately 90 days before the license renewal date, the Administrator will provide notice by first class mail to all licensed water well contractors of the regulatory requirement to complete twelve hours of CEU credits prior to the license renewal date and the number and type (rule or business/safety) of CEU credits they have accumulated during the current two-year licensing period. The notification will also include a schedule of upcoming coursework availability with dates and locations, as well as reference to the program Website containing this information. Any returned mailing will be forwarded to the appropriate water management district for help in obtaining a correct address.
- K. Course Providers shall issue a Certificate of Attendance, provided by the Administrator, to those who complete approved coursework. The Certificate of Attendance shall list the course title and course number (if applicable), type of CEU (rules or business/safety), number of units (hours), date and location of course, and must have the instructor's signature. A Certificate of Attendance shall be issued only to attendees who complete a course evaluation form.
- L. The Administrator may audit the Course Provider and approved coursework classes.
- M. The Administrator may be a Course Provider if approved by the Department.
- N. The Administrator shall convert 12 hours of coursework Certificates of Attendance to Certificates of Completion for Continuing Education Units. Only the Administrator can issue certificates of completion for CEUs.
- O. The Administrator may charge a fee for providing the services described within this manual.

5. STANDARDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COURSE PROVIDERS

- A. Registration by an applicant to be a Course Provider shall be made through application to the Administrator.
- B. Approval as a Course Provider is valid for a period of 2 years.
- C. The Course Provider shall submit the coursework title, a coursework description or outline, and the number of coursework hours that count as credit for rules and/or business-safety credits to the Administrator (or the Department if the Course Provider is also the Administrator) for approval.
- D. The Course Provider, if requested by the Administrator, shall require all students attending approved coursework to present a valid government-issued picture identification card, and sign a coursework sign-in sheet. The sign-in sheet shall reflect the student's name, the water well contractor's license number if applicable, and the validated student signature.
- E. The Course Provider shall sign and date the original approved coursework sign-in sheet and provide copies to the Administrator if so requested.
- F. The Course Provider shall be required to provide a post-coursework evaluation form to coursework students for completion and provide copies to the Administrator.
- G. The Course Provider will issue a multi-part, certificate of attendance to each student who completes approved coursework hours, which includes the approved coursework title and the number and type of approved coursework hours, the date and location of coursework, and the instructor's signature.

6. STANDARDS FOR APPROVED COURSEWORK

- A. For coursework to be approved, it must have a coursework title, a detailed description or outline of the course indicating the number of coursework hours that count as credit for rules or business/safety, and the name and address of the Course Provider. Proposed coursework will be reviewed on merits of relevance and in accordance with the current regulations for the water well industry. Relevant, accurate, and current material for the water well industry that also meets the above requirements shall be approved.
- B. The Administrator will approve or deny all applications for coursework approval within 30 days from receipt. If denied, the applicant may appeal the decision to the Department.
- C. Approved coursework is valid for two years from date of approval, provided no changes are made in the course content or to the minimum qualifications of the instructor.
- D. Educational opportunities not previously designated as approved coursework shall be approved by the Administrator (or the Department as described herein) if the request for approval includes documentation including the course title, a detailed coursework description or outline, the name and qualifications of the instructor, the total number of coursework hours, and proof of completion if attendance has already occurred, and if the course is relevant, accurate, and current to the water well industry. A maximum of three coursework credits may be obtained by online instruction or other correspondence media. Earned coursework credits are valid for 24 months from course date, or until a license is issued or renewed, whichever

comes first. The Department will review decisions by the Administrator for approval or denial of a request to receive CEUs under this paragraph if requested by the student. Such action by the Department shall be subject to the administrative hearing provisions of sections 120.569 and 120.57, F.S.

- E. Attendance at approved courses may count for coursework hours for CEU's (as applicable), or point reduction as described in the Department's Water Well Contractor Disciplinary Guidelines and Procedures Manual, but not both.

7. QUALIFICATIONS OF COURSE INSTRUCTORS

The approved Course Provider shall be responsible for ensuring the coursework instructor(s) assigned to teach a course or part of a course, at a minimum meet one of the following criteria:

- A. Have a four-year college degree or three (3) year's related work experience in the subject matter to be presented,
- B. Be a National Ground Water Association master certified contractor,
- C. Be a licensed water well contractor with at least three (3) years of experience, or
- D. Be an employee of a regulatory agency with jurisdiction over water well construction and have a minimum of three (3) years of experience in the subject matter to be presented.

8. COURSE RECORD KEEPING AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

The following records shall be maintained by the Administrator for a minimum of five years and made available to the Department or a water management district, upon request, for each approved coursework training or instruction provided:

- A. The time, date, and place coursework is conducted.
- B. The name, address, and qualifications of each instructor who teaches any portion of coursework.
- C. The name, address, and, if applicable, the water well contractor license number of each person who attends approved coursework.
- D. Copies of the approved coursework sign-in sheets, if required by the Administrator, used to register students for approved coursework training or instruction. The sign-in sheet shall reflect the student name, the water well contractor license number, if applicable, and the validated student attendance signature.
- E. The coursework title, coursework description or outline, the number of coursework hours that count for rules or business/safety credits and the name and address of the Course Provider.
- F. The post-coursework evaluation forms completed by the students.

9. ADVERTISING OF APPROVED COURSEWORK

- A. A Course Provider may not advertise or publicize coursework as approved coursework until the Administrator or the Department approves such coursework in writing.
- B. A Course Provider must indicate whether coursework is approved by the Administrator or the Department in all advertising and announcements.
- C. A Course Provider may not include any false or misleading information regarding the contents, instructors, or hours of training or instruction of approved coursework.

10. AUDITS

Self-audits shall be conducted by the Administrator and submitted to the Department every two years. Audits may result in notice to the Administrator of deficiencies found and of corrective action required by the Administrator where warranted. The Department reserves the right to audit the Administrator with or without prior notice.

The Administrator and the Department reserve the right to audit Course Provider's administrative records and approved coursework classes with or without prior notice. Auditing approved coursework classes includes visitation during coursework presentations without paying a fee or receiving CEUs. When deficiencies are found after an audit, notice to the Course Provider of such deficiencies will be mailed to the Course Provider by either the Department or the Administrator, depending on which entity performed the audit, and will include corrective action required of the Course Provider. The Department or Administrator may reduce the number of approved coursework hours, or disapprove coursework entirely, if the Course Provider fails to correct noted deficiencies.