

Top-Op's Challenge

Competition and Committee Rules

- I. **Purpose:** To recognize and promote excellence and professionalism in all aspects of water treatment plant operations.

- II. **Nature of the Competition:** Teams of one (1), two (2), or three (3) operators from water treatment plants in California and Nevada will compete against each other in a modestly competitive, fast paced, question and answer “Jeopardy” style tournament. A moderator will pose a broad range of technical questions to the competing teams. Points will be awarded to the team that answers the questions correctly. Preliminary rounds will be organized by the Top-Op’s Committee based on the total number of competing teams. At the conclusion of the preliminary rounds, the three (3) teams with the highest accumulated scores will advance to the championship round of the competition. The team which scores the most points in the championship round will be awarded the title, “Top-Op’s Challenge Champion”. The other two team finalists will be awarded “second place” and “third place” plaques to keep at their respective utilities.

- III. **Emphasis and Scope of Questions:** The technical questions will encompass all aspects of water treatment operations and are comparable to a Water Treatment Operator Certification exam. A panel of California and Nevada water treatment professionals will have prepared the questions that will be used during the competition. The Top-Op’s Committee will perform the final selection of questions. Team members should be prepared to answer questions in the following areas:
 1. Water Treatment
 2. Distribution & Maintenance
 3. Water Quality
 4. Safety

Additional information and sample questions, with answers, will be provided to the team members upon receipt of their entry form. A short video example from past competitions can be sent upon request.

IV. Eligibility:

1. A maximum of nine (9) teams will be accepted for the “Top-Op’s Challenge”.
2. Each utility may enter a total number of two (2) teams.
3. Teams may consist of one (1), two (2), or three (3) competitors, all of which must have either a CDPH Treatment or Distribution certification license.
4. The team must consist of the same individuals throughout the entire tournament, but the team members need not be employees of the same organization. Once the competition begins, there are no substitutions of team members allowed.
5. Individual team member eligibility requirements;
 - A. Work full-time as a Treatment Plant or Distribution Operator, or in a first-line supervisory capacity, meaning a hands-on working/operating supervisor.

- B. Posses a valid T1, D1 or higher California or Nevada Water Treatment or Distribution Operator Certificate.

The intent is that team members will be those individuals who are directly involved in water treatment and/or distribution operations.

V. Competition Entry and Conference Registration Procedures:

1. To enter, a team must complete an official entry form postmarked or e-mailed, no later than the 15th of February, to the CA-NV Section Top-Op's Chair.

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2. Entries will be accepted on a first-come basis until the nine (9) team maximum is reached.
3. Each team captain must attend a pre-competition meeting at the host hotel the morning of the competition at a time designated by the Top-Op's Chair. This notification will be made via e-mail (and phone call if necessary) to the address or number on the application. It is each teams' responsibility to provide accurate contact information on the registration application form.
4. Each team must make its own travel and lodging arrangements. Applications for hotel accommodations may be obtained from the CA-NV Section office. They are also available in the Spring Meeting registration packet, which is mailed to all AWWA Section Members.

VI Judging and Scoring:

1. The Top-Op's Committee, based on the number of teams competing will determine the number of questions for each round.

For example, there may be 33 questions in each round. A round may consist of three sets, with ten questions in each set, plus 3 bonus questions. The point value for each question will be determined prior to the start of competition. The following is an example of the point values for a round of questions:

First Set	2 Points Each
Second Set	6 Points Each
Third Set	10 Points Each
Bonus Questions	10 Points Each

Each team will be given a white board and dry erase marker to record their answer. **ALL** teams that answer the question correctly are awarded the points. If a team answers incorrectly, one point will be deducted. If a team chooses not to answer, no points are awarded or deducted.

2. Depending on the number of entrants, there may be two (2) or three (3) teams competing in any given round.
3. A moderator, who must be a water treatment professional, will ask the questions. Both the questions and the answers will be given to the moderator prior to the competition. **Questions will also be displayed on a screen while the moderator reads them.**
4. There will be a panel of three judges in the event an answer needs clarification.
5. A pool of judges will be selected from California and Nevada water treatment professionals. There will be no more than three judges on the panel. Of the three, every effort will be made to include one judge that is involved with water treatment operations, the second from a water regulatory agency, and the third being a consultant/engineer in the water treatment field.
6. Judges will be temporarily replaced from the panel in the event a team is representing a utility for which a judge is associated.

VII Overall Schedule for the Competition:

Teams selected to compete will receive a schedule of competition with their acceptance letter.

Day of Competition Meeting

A pre-competition meeting will be held before the start of competition with team captains, judges and organizers in attendance. Separate judging criteria will be explained in detail and the competition facilities will be toured. Attendance at this meeting is mandatory for all team captains, but all team members may attend if they wish.

VIII Awards:

The championship team will:

1. Be presented a special team plaque at the close of competition.
2. Be presented with individual plaques for each team member.
3. Be featured in CA-NV Source magazine.
4. Be given custody of the perpetual trophy until the next competition.
5. Represent the Section at the AWWA National Conference competition. The section will provide some funding for air travel and/or hotel expenses.

The runners-up and third place teams will:

1. Receive team plaques and mention in CA-NV Source magazine.

All competing teams will:

1. Receive a Certificate of Participation.
2. Receive a Top-Op's hat and lapel pin.