

NAWTEC14 Speaker Abstract: MWC Plant Operator Certification

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During the early years of Waste to Energy facilities in the USA, there were many problems at these facilities; some were due to the technology selected and some were due to operational problems. This resulted in pressure on government to tighten the operation and permit requirements on existing facilities and stop the construction of planned facilities. As an outgrowth of these pressures, EPA Regulations were enacted as part of the Clean Air Act requiring the certification of operators of Municipal Waste Combustion Units. The MSW Plant Operator Certification paper discusses the EPA requirements for Operator Certification and the ASME QRO Operator Certification testing program operators must pass to obtain ASME Operator Certification.

The EPA documents state that each chief facility operator and shift supervisor must obtain and keep a current Provisional Operator Certification from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers or a current Provisional Operator Certification from a State Certification program. For many small Municipal Waste Combustors, this is the first time they have experienced any certification procedure. This paper describes how the certification process works and how the plant and the candidate can best prepare for the testing program. This paper describes, in general terms, how both Provisional Certification and Operator Certification can be obtained by the ASME. The paper discusses the written Provisional Certification exam and the oral Site Specific Operator Exam, the qualifications required for each exam, the subject matter covered in each exam and, in general, how to prepare for the exam. The paper describes what material the EPA requires to be in the operating manual, how training from this manual can benefit the candidates, and how the facility can assist both ASME and the candidate by providing relevant reference material. Training, as required by EPA, is also discussed in the paper; both the one-time required training course using either the EPA or a State Approved-operator training course and the training course that uses a specific manual.

John Eppich, BSME, MSCE, is a licensed Mechanical and Civil Engineer in California. Prior to his retirement, he was Assistant Department Head responsible for Landfill and Waste to Energy Operations for the Los Angeles Co. Sanitation Districts. He received his QRO Provisional Certification in 1993 and has participated as a member of the QRO Board of Examiners since 1995. He was Chairman of the ASME Solid Waste Processing Division (1990-1991) and served as the ASME Representative on the AAEE Board of Directors (1993-1996). Mr. Eppich has authored and presented numerous papers at many ASME conferences as well as other professional organizations.