Utility Membership Benefits

The Partnership for Safe Water began in 1995 with its program to optimize water treatment plant performance. Since that time, more than 500 treatment plants have joined the program. Many of the “founding” plants are still involved actively in the program, while new utilities join every year. Utility managers periodically inquire about the benefits of Partnership participation. Below is a short description of the many benefits of membership in the Partnership. Use this description to help management understand the value of participation in the Partnership for Safe Water.

The benefits to participating utilities fall into five broad categories:

- Improved water quality
- Recognition
- Regulator confidence
- Consumer confidence and community support
- Employee support

**Improved Water Quality:** Partnership utilities report performance improvement without major capital expenditures.

- The program emphasizes performance improvement by adjusting operational procedures. Major capital expenditures are not the focus of the program.

- The goal of the program is to deliver high quality water continuously to all users. Attention to and measurement of basic distribution system parameters results in timely recognition and response to departures from excellence before they can be notified by customers.

- The program has proven effective for utilities of all sizes. Utilities serving more than 100,000 comprise slightly more than 50% of the current membership. But there are a growing number of participating small utilities. The results from all utilities are the same; as the participants progress through the program, treatment plant performance improves.
Recognition: Awards are provided for two levels of achievement. All systems, regardless of size, can achieve the Directors Award for completing a self-assessment

- The Directors Award recognizes completion of a self-assessment to identify areas for performance improvement.

- The Excellence in Distribution System Operation Award recognizes the highest possible system performance. This level is for a “fully optimized” distribution system and may only be achieved by the most elite systems in the country.

- The Partnership awards are conferred by the six supporting organizations, including U.S. EPA and AWWA.

Recognition by your Community and Customers: Participation in the program demonstrates your commitment to quality and safety for consumers. Successful completion of the program earns awards to demonstrate your accomplishments to your community and can be cited in consumer confidence reports.

- Phase III Directors Award plants submit data annually that is reviewed by a team of peers to maintain the integrity of the program. Award status is suspended for plants that do not maintain their performance level.

- The Partnership issues news releases to local media to recognize award-winning treatment plants.

- Members and award-winning utilities are recognized for their efforts in all AWWA publications (Journal, OpFlow) as well as other national publications throughout the year. A special awards ceremony takes place at the AWWA annual conference each year.

- The Partnership places notices for award-winning plants annually in national publications such as U.S. Mayors and Nation’s Cities. This raises awareness of your accomplishments among elected officials and community leaders.

Regulator Confidence: The Partnership’s technical materials and software help prepare utilities for more stringent distribution system regulatory requirements. Participation in the program assures local, state, and federal regulators that superior plant performance is your goal.

- U.S. EPA is an active partner in the program. This ensures both national and local recognition at the highest level. Partnership award-winning plants are identified as high performers by State regulatory administrators. All Partnership awards include the endorsement of the U.S. EPA and the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators.

- Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is an excellent example of state support for the Partnership program. DEP has provided, and will continue to provide, public recognition and promotion for the state’s more than 100 Partnership members. More importantly, DEP has trained staff in its field offices to provide technical and software support for Partnership for utilities participating in the program and completing the self-assessment procedures.

Employee Support: Employees of Partnership utilities demonstrate a sense of purpose and commitment to achieving high standards. Focusing on optimizing operations improves communication throughout the utility.

- Water utility staff identify and prioritize performance limitations, implement actions to improve system performance, and monitor the impact of changes.
Completing a self-assessment encourages input from all operations and administrative staff at the utility, which in turn fosters better communications and cooperation among staff.

Partnership logo apparel, pins, and hats are available to utilities as rewards and to recognize the efforts their employees make to achieve performance improvements.

These important benefits, coupled with low annual membership fees, makes justifying your membership in the Partnership for Safe Water easy. Please contact the Partnership for Safe Water for additional information.

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