Question of the Month

Can We Get a List of AWWA Standards–Approved Products and Equipment? BY PAUL J. OLSON

QUESTION: Our supplier has some new products that he wants to have certified by AWWA, which got us thinking. We’d like to be certain that products and equipment we use at our utility meet AWWA Standards. Where can our utility obtain a list of all the products that have been certified to AWWA Standards?

ANSWER: You’ve asked a question that the AWWA Standards department has received numerous times over the years. However, certifying products isn’t the purpose of AWWA Standards; the standards don’t include a certification or testing component. Standards aren’t endorsements, and AWWA doesn’t test, certify, endorse, or approve any product, service, or manufacturer. An AWWA Standard is a guide for product manufacturing; products produced to AWWA Standards’ requirements will provide satisfactory service, according to a consensus of knowledgeable representatives of the water supply industry. The use of AWWA Standards by manufacturers and utilities is voluntary.

Although AWWA isn’t a regulatory body and standards’ use is voluntary, many utilities, municipalities, states, and provinces require that products used in a water or wastewater utility meet AWWA Standards. To be certain that a purchased product conforms to an applicable standard, purchasers need to be familiar with the standard’s verification section. That section has provisions such as inspection procedures, sample requirements, and certified test results that the purchaser can follow to verify that the product does meet the standard.

Many manufacturers who supply equipment to the water industry design their products specifically to meet AWWA Standards and clearly indicate that their product meets a certain standard. For the most part, manufacturers claiming to meet a standard have done adequate testing and review of the product to ensure it does, but occasionally an unproven claim is made. AWWA doesn’t verify manufacturers’ claims of conformance, but competing suppliers are quick to uncover errors or false claims.

When erroneous claims are made and brought to our attention, AWWA takes action to ensure that the claims are discontinued. Additionally, in most AWWA Standards, the section on delivery of the product has a clause that states: “If required by the purchaser, the manufacturer shall provide an affidavit that [this product] supplied according to the purchaser’s contract or agreement complies with all applicable provisions of the standard.” If you have any question about a product’s conformance with a standard, stipulate that the affidavit of compliance be provided with the product.

AWWA SOURCEBOOK

One possible reason you and others have assumed that AWWA has certified listings is confusion about the AWWA Sourcebook, a buyer’s reference guide published annually by AWWA. The Sourcebook is a comprehensive listing of products and services and the companies that provide them to water utilities. The Sourcebook is in print and online at www.awwa.org/buyersguide. This guide can help purchasers identify AWWA members and advertisers who are suppliers of the products or services they wish to obtain.

However, a listing in the Sourcebook shouldn’t be interpreted as an endorsement of the products or a classification as products that meet AWWA Standards. In fact, the Sourcebook listings include products and services in many more categories than are covered by AWWA Standards.

Then again, the Sourcebook is the best place to start when searching for products that meet AWWA Standards. The companies listed are active participants in AWWA, knowledgeable about AWWA Standards, can identify which products they provide that meet AWWA Standards, and can explain why a product they offer might not meet a standard.

HEALTH-EFFECTS STANDARDS

Separate from the AWWA Standards program is the NSF/ANSI certification program for direct and indirect drinking water additives. This program establishes minimum requirements for the control of potential adverse human health effects from drinking water additives, such as treatment chemicals, and from products that contact drinking water, such as pipes,

RESOURCES

AWWA Standards are available from the AWWA Bookstore, www.awwa.org/bookstore, individually and as sets. Complete sets are available on searchable CDs and in hard copy. Some standard categories are available in a Custom Manual/Standard Set, which includes all relevant standards and the AWWA Manual of Practice on the topic.

AWWA Standards have been developed in 21 categories: Groundwater and Wells, Filtration, Softening, Disinfection Chemicals, Coagulation, Scale and Corrosion Control, Taste and Odor Control, Prophylaxis, Ductile-Iron Pipe and Fittings, Steel Pipe, Concrete Pipe, Asbestos–Cement Pipe, Valves and Hydrants, Pipe Installation, Disinfection of Facilities, Meters, Service Lines, Plastic Pipe, Storage, Plant Equipment, and Utility Management.
fittings, and other products. The NSF/ANSI certification addresses health effects only and doesn't attempt to include product performance requirements that are addressed by other standards, such as AWWA's. The certification is to one of two standards, NSF/ANSI 60, Drinking Water Treatment Chemicals — Health Effects, and NSF/ANSI 61, Drinking Water System Components — Health Effects.

Certification to NSF/ANSI 60 and 61 is available through several different accredited organizations, including NSF International, Underwriters Laboratories, the Water Quality Association, the Canadian Standards Association, and the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials, to name a few. NSF/ANSI standards provide an important complement to the performance requirements of AWWA Standards, and are required for products and additives used in water supply by many states and provinces.

**AWWA STANDARDS SIGNATURE**

AWWA has embarked on a marketing campaign to raise awareness in the water industry of the AWWA Standards. Included in this campaign is the introduction of the AWWA Standards Signature (above), which can be used by AWWA member organizations, such as utilities, consultants, and suppliers that support and promote the use of AWWA Standards. Companies that use the AWWA Standards Signature are stating only that they support the use of AWWA Standards. Display of the signature shouldn't be interpreted as certification of a company or a product. Nevertheless, as with the suppliers listed in the AWWA Sourcebook, suppliers that use the AWWA Standards Signature are likely to have detailed information about which products of theirs meet AWWA Standards and can probably explain why some products they offer might not meet a standard.

Specifying and purchasing products that conform to AWWA Standards are important for utilities in providing safe water to their customers. Effective use of AWWA Standards helps achieve the goal of safe water.