



AWWA ACE Competitions - Rules and Regulations

TOP OPS

DISCLAIMER

D-1. AWWA specifically does not endorse products manufactured by sponsors and takes no position concerning the adequacy of such products or their compliance with any AWWA standard.

D-2. Each competitor will be required to complete the proper waiver and registration documentation prior to competing in any event.

D-3. This Competition is officiated over by competent officials who are striving for fairness in their judgement for the events so that all competitors are judged as equally as possible. Fair and equal treatment for each and every competitor is the goal of this Competition. There is no intention to provide anyone with an advantage. This Competition is for the fun and enjoyment of the participants and spectators.

D-4. Interested in joining the Top Ops Subcommittee? Submit an application to the Operator Involvement Committee through the AWWA website at <http://www.awwa.org/membership/get-involved/volunteer.aspx>

ELIGIBILITY

E-1. Teams of one (1), two (2) or three (3) water operators from AWWA Sections are invited to compete. All persons on the team shall be AWWA members. Each Section is responsible for verifying membership prior to entering the team into the Competition.

E-2. A maximum of forty-five (45) teams (one to represent each of the 43 AWWA Sections, a team from the host city, and the AWWA Top Ops Champion from the previous year's AWWA Top Ops Competition) will be accepted for the AWWA Top Ops Competition.

E-3. One (1) team per Section will be allowed to enter the preliminary Competition each year, with two exceptions. If a Section's team is the current reigning AWWA Top Ops Champion, which is automatically entered in the next years preliminary, the Section may enter a second team in the Preliminary AWWA Top Ops Competition with full privileges and rights as all other teams. The Section of the ACE host city may also enter two teams.

E-5. A team must consist of the same individuals throughout the entire AWWA Top Ops Competition, but the team members need not be employees of the same organization or utility.

E-6. Individual team members must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:



- a. They must work full-time as a water and/or wastewater treatment plant employee, a water distribution system employee, a sewer collection system operator, or in a first-line supervisory capacity. At least 50% of their time must be as a water treatment plant employee or water distribution employee.
- b. They must possess a valid water operator, wastewater, laboratory, and/or distribution certificate for their jurisdiction. Any Section-level contestants who do not hold this certification may not participate at the Association level.
- c. Team members will be those individuals who are directly involved in water and/or wastewater utility operations on a daily basis. Therefore, teams may not include anyone higher than a first line (fore person) supervisor. Engineers, upper-level supervisors, et al. who do not work as day-to-day operators, are similarly precluded from participating.
- d. Only AWWA Section teams or Inter-Association teams that have qualified by competing in a Section or an Inter-Association Competition are allowed to enter in the preliminary AWWA Top Ops Competition.

E-7. Section Top Ops Team members or team coaches who have participated as a competitor in the past three years are not eligible to serve on the AWWA Top Ops Subcommittee. Likewise, Top Ops Subcommittee members are ineligible from serving as a team member or team coach for 3 years following their service as a subcommittee member. The purpose of this rule is to eliminate any perceived conflict of interest.

INTRODUCTION

I-1. The purpose of the AWWA Top Ops Competition is to recognize and promote excellence and professionalism in all aspects of water operations by establishing a Competition that gives operators the opportunity to showcase their talents.

I-2. AWWA Top Ops Competition is a competitive, question-and-answer tournament.

I-3. A moderator will pose a broad range of technical questions. Points will be awarded to each team that displays a correct answer.

I-4. AWWA Top Ops Competition preliminary rounds will organized based on the total number of competitors.

I-5. The schedule for AWWA Top Ops Competition will be provided on the website and shall appear in the conference program every year.



COMPETITION ENTRY AND CONFERENCE REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

R-1. To enter, follow the instructions on the [ACE Top Ops web page](#). **No registration is available onsite. To allow proper determination of the number of rounds of questions required, AWWA must be informed by the Sections before May 1 of any anticipated late team registration each year.** Each team captain or his/her designee must attend a pre-AWWA Top Ops Competition Captain's meeting prior to the start of the competition. Among other things, the timing and order of AWWA Top Ops Competition will be determined at this meeting. The meeting is mandatory for team captains; however all team members may attend.

R-2. Each team must make its own travel and lodging arrangements. AWWA will not make travel or lodging arrangements for any team.

R-3. Due to the competitive nature of the AWWA Top Ops Competition, and to assure fairness, recording or photographing Top Ops questions in anyway during the Competition is strictly prohibited. Persons observed recording the competition, photographing the questions or transcribing the questions will be asked to discontinue and leave the room.

HOW YOU WIN

H-1. At the end of the preliminary rounds, the four teams with the highest preliminary round scores advance to the two semi-final rounds of the AWWA Top Ops Competition. The winning team in each semi-final round will advance to the AWWA Top Ops Competition Championship round to compete for the AWWA Top Ops Competition Champion title. The team with the second-most points from the AWWA Top Ops Competition Championship round shall be awarded the AWWA Top Ops Competition Runner-Up title. The third and fourth teams will compete in a consolation round to determine a third and fourth place winner. The winning team of this round will be declared the Third-Place Winner and team with the second-most points will be declared the Fourth-Place Winner.

WHAT WINNING TEAM RECEIVES

W-1. The AWWA Top Ops Competition Championship team is automatically eligible for the next year's AWWA Top Ops Competition as a special entry and is not counted as the Section entry.

W-2. The Championship team (including coach) will:

- a. Be presented with a special team trophy to keep at the close of the competition.
- b. Be presented with individual trophies.



- c. Be presented with the traveling trophy of AWWA Top Ops Competition Champions. The trophy must be returned to the Chair of the Top Ops Subcommittee the following year. The Champions must have a plate engraved with their respective Section and year.
- d. May be featured in AWWA publications and will be listed in the Top Ops Hall of Fame on the AWWA website.
- e. Be reimbursed for expenses as outlined by the official AWWA Returning Champion Guidelines, to return for the next AWWA Top Ops Competition at ACE the following year. (In general, expense reimbursement covers transportation costs to and from the convention site, hotel, and meals.)

W-3. The Second, Third and Fourth-place teams will:

- a. Be presented with a special trophy to keep at the close of AWWA Top Ops Competition.
- b. Be presented with individual trophies.
- c. May be featured in AWWA publications.

W-4. Each participating team member will receive a complimentary ACE Exhibit Hall badge and any other item deemed appropriate by AWWA.

COMPETITION

C-1. Team members should be prepared to answer questions in the following areas:

- a. Basic sciences as they apply to water technology;
- b. Public health and sanitary practices;
- c. O&M plant and pump maintenance (e.g. chemical feeders);
- d. Plant and laboratory safety;
- e. Process control during both normal and abnormal conditions;
- f. Operator laboratory operations;
- g. Monitoring requirements;
- h. Water distribution and wastewater collection;
- i. Water hydrology;
- j. Intermediate level mathematics.



C-2. Additional information will be provided to team members upon registration and at the Team Captain's Meeting.

C-3. The number of questions for each preliminary round will be determined by the Top Ops coordinator based on the number of teams competing. For example: There may be 10 to 20 questions in each preliminary round and 3 to 5 tiebreaker questions. The point value for each correctly answered question will be two (2) points. Math questions will be worth three (3) points. The semi-final rounds and the Championship round will consist of 20 to 30 questions with 5 tiebreaker questions.

- a. Each team will be supplied with one whiteboard. One side will have an erasable writeable side and the other will have a sign that says "No Response". Each Competition team will write down, on the whiteboard provided, the correct response to the question for the judges to determine which teams have answered correctly, and award or deduct points as described below. Each team that answers the question correctly is awarded two (2) or three (3) points. If the teams respond incorrectly, one (1) point will be deducted from their score. If a team displays "No Response" zero (0) points will be added to their score. The team with the most points at the end of each preliminary round will be awarded three (3) Competition points, the second place team two (2) Competition points and the third place team one (1) Competition point. Each team will compete in three (3) preliminary rounds.
- b. The allotted time for competitors to answer the questions will be up to twenty five (25) seconds per question.

C-4. At the end of the preliminary rounds, the four teams with the highest winning Competition points (3 points, 2 points, and 1 point) total shall proceed to the semi-final rounds. In the event of a tie, the total cumulative points earned may be used to break a tie. In the case of an absolute tie of cumulative points, five (5) tie breaker questions will be asked to determine who may advance on the semi-final round(s). One team will be eliminated in each of the two semi-final rounds. Those eliminated teams will compete in a consolation round to determine the third and fourth place winners. The two teams winning semi-final rounds will compete in the Championship round/final round to become the AWWA Top Ops Competition Champion.

C-5. The team with the most points scored in the Championship/Final round will be declared the AWWA Top Ops Competition Champion. The remaining team in the Championship round will be the Second Place AWWA Top Ops Competition Winner.

C-6. Depending on the number of entrants, there may be two (2) or three (3) teams competing in any given round.

C-7. The questions will be asked by a moderator, who will be selected by the Chair of the Top Ops Subcommittee. The moderator must be a water professional. Both the questions and answers will be given to the moderator immediately before the competition.



C-8. Once a question has been read aloud by the moderator and/or displayed via Competition monitor, teams will have up to twenty five (25) seconds to write their answers on their whiteboards. Once the allotted time is up each team will either display their answer or “No Response”. Each team has the same opportunity to answer the question(s) within the allotted time, and their answers will be evaluated by the judges.

EQUIPMENT & MATERIALS

E-1. All equipment is to be provided by AWWA.

E-3. Materials provided to each team include:

- A.) Three pens
- B.) Three pads of paper
- C.) Three calculators
- D.) One whiteboard
- E.) Two whiteboard pens
- F.) One eraser
- G.) One bell

JUDGING

J-1. Prior to the displayed answer each team will need to show the judges their whiteboard with an answer written on the erasable writeable side or “No Response” if they are passing on the question. The teams, who in the opinion of the judges, answer the question correctly will be awarded points as outlined in Section C-3a.

J-2. There will be a panel of three judges appointed by the Chair of the Top Ops Subcommittee in the event an answer needs interpretation for accuracy. The decision of the judges will be final.

J-3. Judges will be selected from water professionals in all AWWA Sections. There will be no more than three judges on the panel. Of the three, every effort will be made to select one judge involved in water treatment plant operations, the second, a member of a water regulatory agency or from the academia field, and the third a consultant in the water field. One judge may be an ABC member whose background is consistent with the purpose of AWWA Top Ops. Any of the three judges may also be designated chief judge and have the final word in any judgements.

J-4. Judges cannot be associated in anyway with a team they may judge and will be replaced.



SAFETY

S-1. Standard Competition decorum will be observed at all times during the competition.

S-3. Judges, Competitors, and/or Volunteers may not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal substances whilst performing duties related to the competition. Violation to be determined at the discretion of the Top Ops Competition Committee Chair.

SPONSORS

S-1. Currently there are no in-kind sponsorship opportunities available. Please contact AWWA Sales staff to inquire about available Top Ops cash sponsorships.