



NATIONAL TRIBAL WATER AND WASTEWATER OPERATOR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

ANNOUNCEMENT ON NOVEL CORONA VIRUS COVID-19

POSTPONEMENT OF IN-PERSON TRAININGS AND CONTINUATION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OPERATOR CERTIFICATION SERVICES MARCH 19, 2020

The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. (ITCA) is a tribally-controlled non-profit organization that serves on behalf of Indian Country. ITCA's Board of Directors consists of the elected officials that have the sworn duty to protect and serve each of their respective tribal nations. As a tribal consortium of 21 tribal nations, we work in tandem with tribal communities in Arizona and beyond. As a tribally-controlled non-profit organization, we put the safety and health of tribal members as our highest priority.

In order to respond to the ever changing COVID-19 situation, the Executive Managers of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. have made the decision to **postpone all in-person tribal water and wastewater operator training classes, all Paper-Booklet Testing operator certification examination sessions, and all in-person technical assistance field work that ITCA had originally scheduled to take place during the time period March 16, 2020, through June 30, 2020**. ITCA is acting on behalf of concern for the safety of all community members, attendees, tribal leaders, and our staff as the ongoing concern of COVID-19 (coronavirus) continues to emerge with updates daily. ITCA will continue to monitor the situation and in time, when conditions improve, will begin the rescheduling process for the postponed events. The following services will continue as much as possible through a staffing succession and continuity plan that the ITCA Tribal Water Department is activating. To access these free services, please contact the individuals listed at the end of this announcement.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES WILL CONTINUE BY VIRTUAL MEANS

The existing network of ITCA consultant subject-matter experts that provides free technical assistance to Tribal water and wastewater utilities throughout the Midwest and Western U.S. remains available through virtual means. In the coming days, ITCA endeavors to offer free "Tele-Technical Assistance" services for Tribal water and wastewater utilities. Use your phones, portable devices, and computers to directly connect with ITCA consultant subject-matter experts on technical, managerial, and financial matters of operating and maintaining water utilities.

In addition, ITCA is planning to conduct Tribal utility peer-to-peer conference call and webinar forums for continuity of operations and mutual aid networks.

Ak-Chin Indian
Community
Cocopah Tribe
Colorado River
Indian Tribes
Fort McDowell
Yavapai Nation
Fort Mojave Tribe
Gila River Indian
Community
Havasupai Tribe
Hopi Tribe
Hualapai Tribe
Kaibab-Paiute Tribe
Pascua Yaqui Tribe
Pueblo of Zuni
Quechan Tribe
Salt River Pima-
Maricopa Indian
Community
San Carlos
Apache Tribe
San Juan Southern
Paiute Tribe
Tohono O'odham
Nation
Tonto Apache Tribe
White Mountain
Apache Tribe
Yavapai-Apache
Nation
Yavapai-Prescott
Indian Tribe

TRAINING ALTERNATIVES

ITCA is working to establish free alternative training pathways for Tribal water and wastewater utilities. In the coming days, ITCA endeavors to offer both web-based training and other distance training options in lieu of in-person trainings. The following list are examples of the types of options that are being considered. The ITCA website will be updated as alternative pathways become available.

- Operator Resources Library
 - Loaning of Training Books (distributed by mail)
- Distance Learning through structured self-lead plans
- Online Training
 - On-Demand Training Modules
 - 1-on-1 Live Tutoring through web-based streaming arrangements

OPERATOR CERTIFICATION SERVICES WILL CONTINUE

ITCA endeavors to maintain continued operator certification services and water utility technical assistance services through virtual and limited in-person interaction. Please see the ITCA website for updates, application forms, and registration information.

- **Renewal of Expiring Tribal Operator Certification** – ITCA will continue to accept and process applications for the renewal of expiring operator certifications. ITCA has always assisted Tribal operators who timely submit renewal applications prior to certification expiration and has worked with such operators to extend expiration deadlines in concert with an approved continuing education plan. In response to the COVID-19 situation, ITCA will allow an automatic extension (of at least 10 months) to certifications that are set to expire during the 2020 calendar year.
- **Computer-Based Testing** – For several years, ITCA has offered year-round Computer-Based Testing for Tribal operator certification through a third-party arrangement with PSI, which maintains a network of over 300 testing centers nationwide. ITCA will continue to accept and process registrations and applications for Tribal operator certification through *Computer-Based Testing*. However, please understand that specific computer-based testing center locations may close and open at various times due to testing center employee responses to the COVID-19 situation. ITCA is exploring alternative options for web-based operator certification examinations.
- **Reciprocity** – ITCA will continue to accept and process applications for reciprocity of water and wastewater operator certifications.

In case of water related emergency, contact your primacy agency and follow local emergency response procedures. If you need further assistance, contact ITCA.

How to Contact the ITCA Tribal Water Department during the COVID-19 situation.

ITCA automated phone directory, **(602) 258-4822**

Tribal Water Department email address: TWSInfo@itcaonline.com

Brian Bennon, ITCA Tribal Water Department Director, brian.bennon@itcaonline.com,

Bruce Robinson, ITCA Technical Assistance Project Manager, bruce.robinson@itcaonline.com,

Lionel Puhuyesva, ITCA Training & Certification Program Manager,

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