



ABPA Southern California Chapter Newsletter October 2002 Newsletter

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9th Annual Conference November 6



Don't miss our Chapter's 9th Annual Conference to be held November 6, 2002 at the Pierpont Inn in Ventura! Speakers will include Ray Zierman, talking about the hydraulics of backflow, a review of current field test procedures (provided by Henry Chang—at left, State Cross Connection Control Programs and Where are They Going by State Health, Conducting a Cross Connection Control Survey by Steve Nakauchi, a presentation by Paul Schwartz on the AWWARF Study Overview and proposed changes in the 10th Edition of the USC Manual for CCCHR.

After lunch, presentations will include Bob Gilstrap, our newly-elected Region 6 Director, Region 6 Activity Updates. We'll also hear from Rick Fields about the development of the Central Coast Chapter.

A questions and answer session will follow, with all your questions about ABPA activities and anything else backflow prevention-related being addressed.

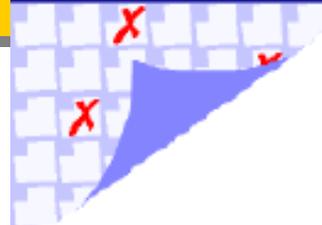
So don't miss this chance to network, get updated in your area and see the latest in cross connection control, seeing the latest in backflow prevention assemblies, test kits and related products and refresh your memory on the proper field test procedures to help break some of those bad habits!

Also, some agencies require Contact Hours for Cross Connection Control Specialists. You can earn these hours by indicating that you do require a certificate of attendance, being present by 8:15, and handing in your name badge at the conclusion of the Conference.

Calendar of Events

Calendar of events

November 6, 2002 9th Annual Conference, Ventura



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Benefits of ABPA Membership

There is a genuine need for education, cooperation and organization in the changing and growing world of backflow prevention and cross connection control. That need is met by ABPA, a non-profit organization founded in 1984. Our goal is to provide education and technical assistance to ensure safe drinking water through effective cross-connection control.

Our members include both new and experienced plumbing contractors, backflow prevention assembly testers, regulators from health departments and water suppliers and others with an interest in maintaining water quality standards. Chapter members receive a quarterly newsletter, reduced rates at seminars, and can participate in special "member only" tours. Join today!



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM



Complete the application form and return with your payment (check or money order only made payable to Southern California Chapter ABPA) to:



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\$ 45.00 ABPA Membership, includes Chapter and National dues (dues and contributions are tax deductible). One applicant per form - please make copies for additional applicants.

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Backflow Industry Product Fair Held June 25

The Fourth Annual Backflow Industry Product Fair (BIPF) was held on June 25 at Griffith Park's Friendship Auditorium in Los Angeles. By all accounts, it was a great success. The event was co-sponsored by the Southern California Chapter ABPA and the Los Angeles County Cross-Connection Control Inspectors Group.

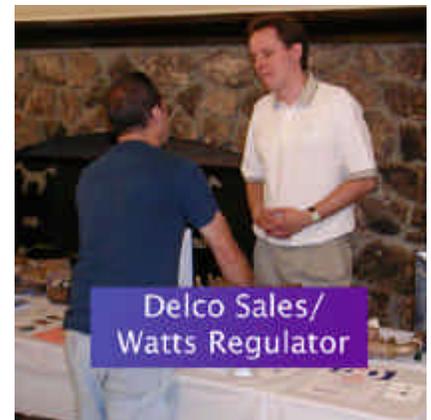
There were nearly 300 attendees and a record number of vendors this year. All of our newsletter advertisers with the exception of Tokay Software participated in the BIPF and are pictured here. All who attended were treated to an In-N-Out Burger lunch, courtesy of our vendors. Those who attended were able to participate in a tour of the USC FCCCHR Testing Lab. USC staff provided an excellent overview of the Approval Program for assemblies.



Other highlights included a demonstration of test procedures by Henry Chang and an excellent repair seminar by Jim Purzycki. Testers present were especially interested in the SVB test procedures which will be required for ABPA Tester Certification starting January 1, 2004. Special guests included Bob Gilstrap (at left), our newly elected Region 6 Director. It was great to see him at our event, and he plans to participate in more Chapter activities when possible. ABPA National Certification Administrator Ernest Havlina also attended with his wife, Pauline.



Thanks to all our vendors and participants who helped to make this event such a success. Plans are already in the works for next year's BIPF. Special thanks to our photographer, Paul Schwartz and Chris Camacho from the LA Cross Connection Control Inspectors Group.



California's Decreasing Water Supply

Submitted by Richard Carlson, County of San Diego

This is the first of two articles on the decreasing water supply and what is being done to address the problem. This article deals with the Colorado River supply, the second article will deal with the State of California 2002 Recycled Water Task Force. The agenda of the Task Force is to remove barriers to the use of recycled water in California. The second article will also deal with one of the barriers that has the potential of impacting all Cross Connection Control Specialists—that of the recycled water cross-connection control shutdown test.

Simply put, California is running out of water. The lack of water has the potential to become acute in Southern California for several reasons. An ever-increasing population places an ever-increasing demand on the potable water supply. Couple this with the decreasing supply for a large portion of Southern California—the Colorado River—and we have a problem.

The Colorado River supply was divided among the seven basin states based on the 1922 Colorado River Compact, one element of the “Law of the River”. The “Law of the River” is a collection of statutes, contracts and court decrees that apportion and regulate use of the Colorado River’s waters. The seven basin states are California, Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. The 1944 Mexican Water Treaty promises a portion of the water to Mexico since the Colorado River flows through a portion of Mexico into the Sea of Cortez. California was allotted 4.4 million acre-feet (MAF) a year, with the other basin states a proportionate quantity. What was not realized when the river was divided up was that a series of wet years artificially inflated the amount of water in the Colorado River. However, the amounts are set in federal law and cannot be changed. I say this because the basin states, especially California, have tried to change the amounts almost from the time they were set, without success. Water law is complex, arcane and a source of a good living to many in the legal community.

California is currently using about 5.2 MAF of Colorado River water. Remember that the California allotment is for only 4.4 MAF. That means that California is using about 0.8 MAF that belongs to someone else. And that is a lot of water (800,000 acre-feet or approximately 260,800,000,000 gallons). Because of population growth in the other basin states, they now want their fair share. A deal was signed off by the federal government and California during the Clinton administration called the “Quantification Settlement Agreement”. This Agreement will reduce the amount of Colorado River water supplied to the state over the next 15 years, decreasing to the 4.2 MAF allotment. So, with the population ever increasing along with the demand for potable water, the supply of potable water is going in the opposite direction.

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If that were not bad enough, the deal was somehow tied into the water transfer from the Imperial Valley to San Diego County. This agreement, when and if signed, will transfer as much as 65 billion gallons of water a year from the Imperial Valley to San Diego County at a cost to San Diego County residents of \$50 million per year. It looked like the agreement was a done deal until the issue of the Salton Sea was raised. The main supply of water for the Salton Sea is actually the result of a break in a dike during the construction of the All-American Canal used to transport Colorado River water in 1905. Before the canal was repaired, all the water flowed to the low point—the Salton Sink which is now the Salton Sea. Over the years, the 376 square miles of the Salton Sea has developed into a main stopover for migrating waterfowl. It has also turned into a very productive fishery and a recreation destination that provides a source of income for the Imperial Valley. The downside is that the salinity of the sea has increased over time to where it is now saltier than the Pacific Ocean. It is felt that the water transfer to San Diego County as now structured will quickly increase the salinity of the sea and in effect turn it into a dead sea.

Consequently, the attempt to finalize an agreement between the Imperial Valley and San Diego County at the time of this article has not been completed. The overriding problem is that the agreement must be signed by October 15 or lawyers and state and federal environmental agencies won't have time to complete the other last-minute details by the December 31, 2002 deadline. If it is not signed by Dec 31, 2002 the feds will waive the 15-year reduction period and make it immediate. Although that may sound alarmist, the federal government has stated in no uncertain terms that is what will happen. That would be a disaster for San Diego County because the Colorado River supplies over 90% of San Diego's water. It is estimated that the amount of Colorado River water delivered to San Diego County would be cut in half. Hopefully the agreement will be signed by the time this article is published, but in spite of intense pressure from the State of California and the federal government, the Imperial Valley is standing firm. However, an Imperial Valley spokeswoman said of one of the recent meetings, "It could be that the fact they met for such a long time (8 hours) and didn't kill one another is a good sign".



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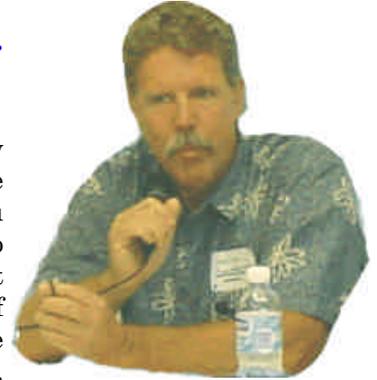
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Hands-On Hints #4: You Have the Right to Remain Silent

Submitted by San Diego County Director Michael C. Ahlee



Those six little words (actually four of them are little, two are big words) that nobody wants to hear “you have erred in your procedure”, are words that can ruin your whole day. Then of course you have to stand there and listen to an explanation of what you did wrong. This is sort of like adding insult to injury. As much as you don’t like to hear these words, your Proctor does not like to say these words. Sometimes it’s just plain unavoidable. Usually an explanation from the Proctor is all it takes. Most of the time you hear the explanation and think about it, then smack yourself in the forehead and say #&%\$@#&*\$%\$*^ I can’t believe I did that! However, occasionally the explanation will leave you scratching your head and talking to yourself.

In circumstances like this, you don’t have to walk away talking to yourself, you can actually ask for a better explanation. Proctors are very well trained, but as you know nobody’s perfect. You have the right to an on-site appeal anytime you feel the Proctor has made an error. You can go to the Proctor-in-Charge and plead your case. If you’re disputing that you did what the Proctor says you did, that will be a very tough case to make. However if you are disputing that what you did was not a cause for failure, you may be able to make your case. As Proctors, we must view your actions in the light of whether or not they may have caused erroneous results. It does not matter whether they affected your test results, rather it’s whether or not they could have affected your test results. Your Proctor must be able to make the case that your actions could have led to erroneous test results. If you believe that the case has not been made, you have every right to appeal that decision to the on-site Proctor-in-Charge. If you’re unhappy with that decision you may also appeal in writing to the Program Administrator. Typically, these types of disputes will be handled by the on-site Proctor-in-Charge to everyone’s satisfaction.

Sometimes it’s difficult to know what constitutes an error and what does not. Some parts of the test procedure are totally arbitrary and could not affect the outcome of the test one way or another. Other parts of the test are critical and definitely can affect the outcome of the test. If you’re not sure, it’s best to follow the procedures exactly as written. A good example of test procedures that have an arbitrary order is the pressure vacuum breaker test. These three steps can be done in any order, and will not affect the outcome of the test in any way:

- Step a. Remove air inlet valve canopy.
- Step b. Bleed water through both test cocks to eliminate foreign material.
- Step c. Install appropriate fittings to test cocks.

A good example of the test procedure that can affect the outcome of the test would be Steps h. and i. of the reduced pressure principle test procedures (relief valve opening point test). Step h. completes the procedure for bleeding the air out of the hose and gauge. The next step asks you to close the number two shutoff valve and then note the apparent pressure drop across the number one check. In both of these steps, the order is critical. In step h., if you close the low side first and then the high side, you will fail your exam. The explanation from your Proctor would go something like this: *Prior to the relief valve opening point test any time you have the high side flowing water without the low side flowing water you run the risk of discharging the relief valve prematurely. Closing the low side first would allow the high side to be running all by itself; this constitutes a critical error.*

In step i., if you were to make a note of the apparent pressure drop across the first check prior to closing the number two shut off valve this too would be considered a critical error. The explanation would be that *until number two shutoff valve is closed you could still have flow through the assembly; thus any reading obtained would not be accurate as an apparent pressure drop . The apparent pressure drop is critical because it is used as a reference point two and sometimes three more times during the test.*

These are just a couple of examples of things that would be considered errors and the explanations you would receive. There are many others, as well as many things that can be done out of sequence that would not be considered errors. If you’re not sure, the best thing to do is ask before you start your exam.

Good luck on your next exam and as usual, happy testing.

Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Training in Paradise

Submitted by Casey Arndt, City of Carlsbad

The University of Southern California Foundation for Cross Connection Control and Hydraulic Research (USC FCCCHR) held its *Course for the Training of Backflow Prevention Assembly Testers* in Incline Village, Nevada from August 12-16. The course covered all types of backflow prevention assemblies from their makeup and parts to their required specifications to attain approval from the Foundation. The course concluded with a written test and a hands-on test on the reduced pressure principle assembly (RP), double check valve assembly (DC), pressure vacuum breaker (PVB) and spill-resistant pressure vacuum breaker (SVB).



On Sunday, I was thinking to myself, “this is going to be an easy week. They’ll do a little reading, show a couple of backflow prevention assemblies and we’ll be out by 2:00 or 3:00.” I couldn’t have been more wrong. In actuality, there was a plethora of information to be learned in only five days. Not to mention the necessity of learning how to properly test and troubleshoot four different assemblies. I now have a better understanding of backflow prevention and an appreciation for it and the Foundation.

Paul Schwartz, Chief Engineer and Henry Chang, Mechanical Engineer instructed the five-day course. The course was well organized with attention to every detail. A schedule for the week was posted the first day and was executed flawlessly every day. Typically, the day began with classroom instruction followed by an afternoon of hands-on teaching. Preceding the morning sessions and following the afternoon class, the lab was made available to practice the material. At first, I didn’t want to be standing out in the sun after class to continue working on the assemblies but I did and it really paid dividends during the test. Paul and Henry were extremely helpful by making themselves available for anyone and everyone during the week.

We covered the DC on Monday, the RP on Tuesday, the PVB on Wednesday and the SVB on Thursday. Paul and Henry made a point of teaching the hydraulics behind each one of the assemblies, not just the steps of the testing procedure. Each one of the assemblies was broken down and then it was explained what was happening inside. A combination of video, verbal and hands-on instruction made these concepts much easier to understand.

Finally, Friday came and so did the testing. Once I received the “thumbs-up” from Paul, it was outside to take on the hands-on testing. Prior to the course, I had been told stories of how intensely difficult the hands-on portion was and the fate endured by others before me. However, I didn’t feel as nervous as I thought I would be. I was actually quite calm and collected. I believe that this was because of the training I had received throughout the week, as well as the extra hours of time spent in the lab which allowed me to complete the testing of all four assemblies with confidence. Once the test was over, I was relieved and I left feeling like I had conquered the beast. My trip to Incline Village was a success—I had gained the knowledge necessary to become a certified backflow prevention assembly tester.

Chapter News



Chapter officers and County Directors met on July 17 and August 20, 2002. Topics discussed included the 9th Annual Chapter Conference to be held November 6 in Ventura (see page one), and the 2004 International Conference to be held in Long Beach. Chapter members were also very involved in planning the Western Regional Backflow Conference (WRBC) held earlier this month in Las Vegas. We'll have a story about the WRBC in the next Chapter newsletter.

Welcome new members (I'll get those later when there's time which there isn't) who have joined our Chapter since the last newsletter was published. Thank you for supporting our Chapter!

Vendors interested in advertising in our Chapter newsletter should contact Pete Peters at (909) 987-2591.



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