
Environmental Health Committee

HB 1283

Brief Description: Modifying provisions regarding the operators of public water supply systems.

Sponsors: Representatives Rolfes, Campbell, Kretz, Upthegrove and Ormsby; by request of Department of Health.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Clarifies the authority to certify and revoke or suspend certification for backflow assembly testers and cross-connection control specialists working with public water systems.

Hearing Date: 2/19/09

Staff: Pam Madson (786-7111)

Background:

Operators of a public water system must be certified if the system serves 15 or more connections or serves an average of 25 or more people during a 60-day period in a year. A public water system is a system providing piped water for human consumption including collection, treatment, storage, or distribution facilities. A certified operator is the person in charge of the technical operation of the system or a major part of the system.

Any examination required for certification must be offered in each region in which the Department of Health (DOH) has a regional office. A certificate may be revoked, after a hearing, if the certificate was obtained by fraud, if the operator commits gross negligence in the operation of a purification plant or distribution system, or if the operator violates laws on water system operation or rules or orders of the DOH.

A cross-connection is a physical link between a drinking water system and a potential source of contamination. Backflow conditions can occur when pressure in the system is such that water

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from a potential source of contamination is introduced into the public water system. Cross-connection control programs are required for public drinking water systems to prevent this from occurring. Backflow preventers are used to help isolate potential sources of contamination. Under the Uniform Plumbing Code, homeowners must install backflow preventers to protect the homeowner's plumbing system from contamination.

Summary of Bill:

The operators of a public water system must be certified, including backflow assembly testers and cross-connection control specialists.

Any examination required for certification must be offered in both eastern and western Washington.

The Secretary of the DOH may revoke or suspend an operator's certificate for fraudulently obtaining it, for committing gross negligence in operating a public water system, for fraud or gross negligence in testing or maintaining devices intended to protect a public water system from contamination, or for intentionally violating laws on water system operation or rules or orders of the department.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.