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-or-

Your 104(g) training center  
at the address below:



United States Office of EPA-832-F-00-009  
Environmental Water May 2000  
Protection (4204)  
Agency

## On-Site Technical Assistance Program / 104 (g)



Helping Small Community Wastewater Treatment Plants to Improve Performance, and Achieve and Maintain Compliance





### ***Background.***

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's On-Site Technical Assistance Program was implemented in 1982 to provide financial, technical, and operation and maintenance assistance to small, municipal wastewater treatment plants through **direct on-site operator training**. Assistance is provided to plants in danger of non-compliance or are out of compliance with their discharge permits. Enhancing plant operations helps to improve water quality.

The program is also known as the **104(g) Program**, reason being, the program is authorized under section 104(g)(1) of the Clean Water Act. Funding for the program is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state agencies, and your state 104(g) training center. The program is operated and administered in conjunction with EPA and your states and state 104(g) training centers.

### ***No Costs to the Community for Operator Outreach Assistance.***

**The community pays nothing for on-site assistance.** The community will be expected to make the necessary improvements to achieve compliance. This may require an expenditure by the municipality if, for example, equipment needs to be repaired or replaced. However, the focus of the on-site assistance is on low-cost improvements.

### ***How the EPA's 104(g) Program Works.***

104(g) training centers employ a simple yet effective procedure to deliver operator outreach assistance to needy municipal treatment plants.

- The trainer identifies plants to receive assistance and their capabilities.
- The training centers and states identify an on-site trainer that can address local needs and advises the plant/municipal staff.
- The on-site trainer contacts and works directly with the plant/municipality to provide the necessary training.

On-site instructors are both trouble-shooters and trainers. Their mission is to help eliminate treatment process control problems causing violations. **Trainers are not acting as enforcement agents, but it is expected that communities make sincere efforts to solve their problems.**

### ***The Role of an On-Site Trainer.***

The trainer meets with plant personnel and municipal officials to discuss problems and to establish ground rules.

- Diagnoses the specific cause(s) of problems, such as improper process control, inadequate sludge disposal, or design errors.
- Develops a training plan.
- Provides over-the-shoulder operator training and technical assistance as required.
- Follows up with visits to the plant over several months to a year later, to work on addressing factors limiting the plant's performance.
- Completes a report that summarizes the assistance effort.

### ***Compliance Problems in Small Communities.***

The need for individualized technical assistance varies greatly. Many plants require highly developed operator skills that small municipal operators don't always have. Staff turn-over rates can be high. Plant budgets and salaries may be low. These ingredients can lead to non-compliance, and can place the plant high on a priority list for operator outreach assistance.



### ***Additional Benefits.***

The On-Site Technical Assistance Program helps in other ways.

- Identifies any need to repair or build new facilities to meet existing or future permit limitations.
- Recommends ways to improve preventive maintenance on equipment and structures.
- Often reduces energy and chemical costs through more efficient operating techniques.

In addition, the On-Site Technical Assistance Program gets plant operating staff and the local elected officials working together on the problems at the treatment plant. As a result, local officials better understand wastewater treatment responsibilities and the needs of plant and staff.