Continuing Education

what’s in it for you?
Continuing Education

AFFORDABLE  ACCESSIBLE  ACHIEVABLE
Onsite wastewater installers were mandated to take training in 2003

- Course was five days long
- All training took place in the classroom
- Course was developed for experienced installers
- The plan at the time was to implement continuing education (it was part of the original agreement with Municipal Affairs) but it was only put into practice during a new code cycle (Standard of Practice Update)
Feedback from the 5-day program

- A common complaint (almost 100% of respondents) said it was too much information in too short a period of time.
  - Requests were received to extend the training

- Student surveys indicated significant support for ongoing (continuing) education
Changes to the training

- Over the past seventeen years, the training has been updated and extended several times, first to six days, then seven days, then eight days - all in the classroom setting.
- The course is now nine days long; eight days in the classroom and one site and soil field day.
- We are no longer training experienced installers. Fully 80% of those who participate in the training now are new to the industry.
Response to changes to the training

- Participants are still insisting that there is too much material to absorb in a short period of time.
- Surveyed participants are in support of ongoing training.
Discussions with Municipal Affairs

- Continuing Education was part of the original training agreement in 2002, but not implemented.
- In 2005, the AOWMA submitted a proposal for continuing education to Municipal Affairs entitled Continuing Education - 2005 and beyond.
- In 2009, when the SOP was updated, AOWMA also updated their continuing education proposal and resubmitted it to Municipal Affairs.
- Over the years, the AOWMA has consistently raised the topic with Municipal Affairs, without success.

WHY???
Municipal Affairs and the AOWMA frequently get complaints about failed systems. Some system failures are due to homeowner misuse, overloading, abuse, and lack of maintenance. A significant number are due to poor site assessment and installation practices. When the failures are investigated, the result is often shoddy permitting paperwork, questionable soils identification and poor installation. This is compounded by a permit being closed even when the work doesn’t meet the requirements or the intent of the Standard of Practice.

This reflects poorly on the association as the training body and the industry in general. It marginalizes the work of conscientious installers and has the effect of the industry losing credibility with the regulatory body and with the general public.
The Best Laid Plans. . .
How will continuing education help?

- Increase skill levels and levels of understanding
- Provide an opportunity for ongoing assessment of competency
- Fill in training gaps that cannot be addressed in the short training program

The onsite wastewater industry is one of the very few disciplines that does not offer an apprenticeship of two to four years to journeyman status. After five to ten days of training, our contractors are released into the industry and expected to be expert at their work.
Samples from homeowner complaints
What needs to happen?

- The Association is working on a training agreement with Municipal Affairs to cover the next code cycle (five-year plan). This training agreement will cover:
  - Updating the current training material to the 2020 Standard of Practice
  - Delivering the Onsite Wastewater Practitioner Training Program under the 2020 Standard of Practice
  - Develop and deliver the 2020 Standard of Practice Update training
  - Develop and implement a continuing education framework for our industry
What will it look like?

- Continuing education will only succeed if it is:
  - Attainable
  - Accessible
  - Affordable

- The AOWMA intends to
  - Ensure that our members in particular and the industry in general are supported and well-served through this training agreement
  - Continue to work towards the professionalism of the onsite wastewater industry. Our member’s work, and the good efforts they put in to provide a high level of service needs to be protected and recognized.
Installers will collect points, credits or hours over the five year code cycle

These collected points can come from many areas, such as, but not restricted to:

- Pulling permits (actively working in the industry is building skills)
- Mentoring others (installers new to the industry could use some help)
- Attending training in disciplines directly or indirectly supporting your business
- Participating in industry education and training events through webinars, seminars, conferences, etc.
- Developing curriculum or leading training
- Serving on committees that relate to the onsite wastewater industry
Other considerations

- Other training agencies and organizations will be able to submit their training offerings to be recognized for continuing education - you will not have to collect your credits solely from the AOWMA.

- Over the next weeks, the AOWMA will keep you informed about the development of this program. In the meantime, we will provide credit for attending the convention and trade show to those who sign in and participate. Why wait? Begin collecting your continuing education credits now!
Questions?