

Top Ops Rules & Regulations

(MATH QUESTIONS WILL NOT BE ASKED AT 2023 TRI-CON COMPETITION DUE TO TIME CONSTRAINTS)

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of the AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition is to recognize and promote excellence and professionalism in all aspects of water operations by establishing a competition that gives operators the opportunity to showcase their talents. The AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition is a competitive, question-and-answer tournament where a moderator asks a broad range of technical questions to the participating teams and they have limited time to answer. Strategy is involved since points are awarded for correct answers, deducted for incorrect answers, and no change occurs to the score for not answering a question.

DISCLAIMER

2. AWWA specifically does not endorse products manufactured by sponsors and takes no position concerning the adequacy of such products or their compliance with any AWWA Standard.

3. Each competitor will be required to complete the proper waiver and registration documentation prior to competing in any event. **Verification of eligibility will be required at the time of registration.**

4. This competition is officiated by competent officials who are striving for fairness in their judgement for the events so that all competitors are judged as equally as possible. Fair and equal treatment for each competitor is the goal of this competition. There is no intention to provide anyone with an advantage. This competition is for the fun and enjoyment of the participants and spectators.

5. In order to be eligible, Sections must verify that each person is authorized to compete. Details regarding eligibility are noted in the next section.

6. Top Ops team members or team coaches who have participated as a competitor or coach are eligible to join the Top Ops Subcommittee. If you are a member of the Subcommittee you cannot also be a current competitor or coach due to perceived conflicts of interest.

ELIGIBILITY & MEMBERSHIP

7. Teams of one (1), two (2), or three (3) water operators from AWWA Sections are invited to compete.

8. Each AWWA Section, including Multi-State Provincial Sections may enter one (1) team in the AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition. The ACE local host Section is permitted to send up to two (2) teams. The Section with the returning champion team is permitted to send one (1) additional team, up to a total of two (2). If the ACE Local Host Section also has the returning champion, they are permitted to send a total of three (3) teams.

9. Each AWWA Top Ops Competition participant must be a current AWWA member from the time of registration through the ACE event. This membership may be an individual membership, or the participant can be a regular employee of an AWWA Utility Member. Each Section is responsible for verifying the membership status of each participant before entering them into the competition.

10. Only AWWA Section teams that have qualified by competing in a Section Top Ops competition are allowed to enter the AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition. If there are not enough teams for a Section to hold a Top Ops competition at the Section level, a team may enter the AWWA Top Ops competition with approval from the Section that they are representing.
11. A team must consist of the same individuals throughout the entire AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition, but the team members need not be employees of the same organization or utility.
12. All team members must satisfy the following eligibility requirements:
 - a. They must work full-time as a water treatment plant employee or a water distribution system employee. At least 50% of their time must be as a water treatment plant employee or a water distribution employee.
 - b. They must possess a valid water operator, laboratory, and/or distribution certificate for their jurisdiction. Any Section-level contestants who do not hold this certification may not participate at the Association level.
 - c. Only individuals whose primary day-to-day job functions include hands-on operational tasks within the water utility or distribution system are eligible to compete. Teams may not include anyone with a more senior job function than a first line (fore person) supervisor. Engineers are not allowed to compete unless they are working as a full-time operator.

REGISTRATION

13. To enter, follow the instructions on the Top Ops web page. **No registration is available onsite. To allow proper determination of the number of rounds required, AWWA must be informed by the Sections before May 1 of any anticipated late team registrations each year.** Each coach must attend the Mandatory Coach's Meeting. The timing and order of the AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition rounds will be determined at this meeting. All team coaches should attend this meeting
14. Each participating team member will receive a complimentary **ACE Exhibits Only Registration**. Each competitor is allowed one (1) complimentary **Spouse/Guest Registration** granting access to the Exhibit Hall during official Exhibit Hall hours.
15. Each competitor and coach must register themselves and sign their own waiver. Please ensure that all members of the team register with the same team name.
16. Each team member must make their own travel and lodging arrangements. AWWA will not making travel or lodging arrangements for any team. AWWA does not reimburse travel expenses (airfare, lodging, food) for any team. Please check with your Section on travel reimbursements.

HOW YOU WIN

17. At the end of all preliminary rounds, the four (4) teams with the highest total qualifying points shall proceed to the semi-final rounds. In the event of a tie of qualifying points, the team with the higher total round points will advance. In the case of a tie of cumulative round points, the teams that are tied will answer five (5) additional questions which will be asked and scored in the same manner as typical round questions.
18. One team will be eliminated in each of the two (2) semi-final rounds. Those eliminated teams will compete in a consolation round to determine the third and fourth place winners.
19. The two (2) teams winning semi-final rounds will compete in the Championship round to become the AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition Champion. The team with the most round points scored in the Championship/Final round will be declared the AWWA ACE Top Ops

Competition Champion. The remaining team in the Championship round will be the Second Place AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition Winner.

WHAT WINNING TEAM RECEIVES

20. The AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition Champion team is automatically eligible for the next year's AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition as a special entry and is not counted as the Section entry.

21. The Championship team (including coach) will:

- a. Be presented with a team trophy to keep at the close of the competition.
- b. Be presented with individual trophies.
- c. Be presented with the traveling trophy of AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition Champions. The trophy must be returned to the Chair of the Top Ops Subcommittee the following year. The Champions will have a plate engraved with their respective Section and year added to the traveling trophy.
- d. May be featured in AWWA publications and will be listed in the Top Ops Hall of Fame on the AWWA website.
- e. Be reimbursed for expenses as outlined by the official AWWA Returning Champion Guidelines, to return for the next AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition at ACE the following year. (In general, expense reimbursement covers transportation costs to and from the convention site, hotel, and meals.)

22. The Second, Third and Fourth-place teams will:

- a. Be presented with a trophy to keep at the close of AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition.
- b. Be presented with individual trophies.
- c. May be featured in AWWA publications.

COMPETITION

23. The competition will consist of three (3) preliminary rounds for each team, two (2) semi-final rounds, and a Championship round. Depending on the number of entrants, there may be two or three teams competing in any preliminary round. The number of questions for each competition round will be determined by the subcommittee. Questions used in the competition are from the approved reference list posted on the AWWA website and have been verified by a minimum of three subject matter experts.

24. Questions for the competition are categorized into the following subject areas:

- a. Safety
- b. Water Treatment Processes
- c. Laboratory
- d. Maintenance
- e. Distribution
- f. Basic Science

25. The questions will be asked by one (1) or more moderators, who will be selected by the Chair of the Top Ops Subcommittee. Each moderator must be a water professional.

26. Each question will be displayed on a monitor in front of the competitors and read aloud by the moderator. Once a question has been read, the competitors must write the answer on their white boards within fifteen (15) seconds for a non-math question or within twenty-five (25) seconds for a math question. Once the allotted time is up, each team will display a single white

board showing either the team's answer or "No Response". During both the semi-final rounds and the final rounds, the time the competitors must write the answer on their white boards within 30 seconds.

27. The judges will determine whether the answer displayed by each team is correct or incorrect. Correctly answered non-math questions will be worth two (2) round points. Correctly answered math questions will be worth three (3) round points. Incorrect answers (both non-math and math) will result in the deduction of one (1) round point. If a team chooses to display the "No Response" side of the whiteboard, round points will neither be earned nor deducted for that question.

28. Each team will compete in three (3) preliminary rounds. The team with the most round points at the end of each preliminary round will be awarded three (3) qualifying points, the second-place team will receive two (2) qualifying points and the third-place team will receive one (1) qualifying point. If there is a tie of round points at the end of a preliminary round, the teams that are tied will answer one or more additional questions until the tie is broken. The additional question(s) will be asked and scored in the same manner as typical round questions.

EQUIPMENT & MATERIALS

29. All equipment is to be provided by AWWA. Materials provided to each team include:

- a. pens
- b. 3 pads of paper
- c. 3 calculators
- d. 3 whiteboards
- e. 4 whiteboard pens
- f. 1-3 erasers
- g. 1 bell

JUDGING

30. There will be a panel of no more than three (3) judges appointed by the Chair of the Top Ops Subcommittee. In the event an answer needs interpretation for accuracy, one (1) of the three (3) judges will be designated as the chief judge and will have the final word in any judgements.

31. Judges cannot be associated in any way with a team they may judge and will be replaced in the event of any conflict of interest.

32. The decision of the judges will be final.

SAFETY & CONDUCT

33. Due to the competitive nature of the AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition, and to assure fairness, recording or photographing Top Ops questions in any way during the competition is strictly prohibited. Persons observed recording the competition, photographing the questions, or transcribing the questions will be removed from the competition room and required to erase or destroy all captured competition material under the observation of security. A team may be disqualified and/or barred from future competitions if a competitor, coach, or an audience member affiliated with the team is caught engaging in any of these activities or any other act deemed to be subversive to the integrity or fairness of the competition.

34. Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated and could result in individuals or teams being disqualified from the competition. Judges, competitors, and/or volunteers may not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal substances while performing duties

related to the competition Violations of this will be determined at the discretion of AWWA Staff and the Top Ops Competition Subcommittee Chair.

35. Teams will not be allowed to participate if they are wearing articles of clothing or using equipment plainly displaying offensive language, slogans, or graphics.

36. Children under the age of 16 entering the Exhibit Hall and/or AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition area during show hours need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. No one under the age of 16 is allowed in the Exhibit Hall and/or AWWA ACE Top Ops Competition area during move-in, move-out, or non-show hours. A parent or guardian assumes all risks and responsibility for the safety of his or her child. Anyone 12 years or older will require a badge to enter the Exhibit Hall and/or Top Ops competition area.

PENALTIES

37. The decision of the judges will be final. Arguing about an answer or any other unsportsmanlike conduct will be penalized. A warning will be given for the first offense, one (1) qualifying point will be deducted if a second offense occurs, and the team will be disqualified if a third offense occurs.