NACWA Roundtable Discussion

Developing Effective Pretreatment Working Relationships

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Developing Effective Pretreatment Working Relationships

Being a Pretreatment Professional is a High Wire Balancing Act!!!

- Need to Comply with all EPA & State Regulations!
- Need to Enforce Your Regulations!
- Need to Protect Your Facilities!
- Need to Get It All Done, AND
- You Need to Develop and Maintain Good Working Relationships with Everyone!

“I don’t get no respect!!!”
Developing Effective Pretreatment Working Relationships

How Can an Environmental Enforcer Maintain Good Working Relationships?

- Need to be a Good Communicator
- Need to be Somewhat Politically Savvy and Politically Astute!
- Need to Think BEFORE you Speak
- Need to Think about the possible ramifications of what you say!
- Need to Know the Players you are interacting with
Developing Effective Pretreatment Working Relationships

Who Are the Players We Deal With???

- EPA & State Regulators
- Executive Director, Board or Directors, Commissioners, Division Directors, Etc.
- Coworkers – Plant, Interceptor & Lab Managers, Supervisors, Staff…
- Industrial Users & User Groups – Your Customers!!!
- Political – Mayor, Governor, City Council, Economic Development Agency, Environmental Advocacy Groups, More...
Developing Effective Pretreatment Working Relationships

- We Deal with Internal and External Customers Daily
- Sometimes these Interactions result in Complaints
- Our Goals are to meet NPDES Permit requirements, protect and improve the environment, without our customers complaining about us.
- This can be achieved by:
  - good communications with customers
  - educating our customers
Example #1 - Working Relationship with a User Group – Dental BMP

- NBC Dental Mercury BMP Program
- When the program was proposed dentists fought “tooth and nail”
- BMP program offered 2 alternatives: Achieve full permit compliance with Hg Limit or Install an Amalgam Separator
- Worked with the RI Dental Association throughout the process to educate the Association and the Dentists
Example #1 - Working Relationship with a User Group – Dental BMP

- NBC Held Educational Workshops for the Dentists
- A Vendor Exposition of approved amalgam separators was set up at each workshop
- Staff manned tables to assist Dentists to complete paperwork
- 100% of Dentists in 10 Cities and Towns Installed ISO 11143 Amalgam Separators
Example #1 - Working Relationship with a User Group - Dental BMP

- The NBC Dental BMP Program has been a huge success.
- Hg Loadings to Field’s Point WWTF reduced 58% since 2003, 15% in 2008 alone.
- Hg Loadings to the Bucklin Point WWTF Reduced 44% since 2003, 31% in 2008.
- Overall Influent Hg Loadings to NBC Reduced 54% since 2003.
- State of Rhode Island has adopted NBC BMP Program statewide.

Bar chart showing Mercury Loading at Field's Point & Bucklin Point WWTFs from 2003 to 2008.
Example #1 - Working Relationship with a User Group – Dental BMP

Governor’s Citation

NACWA National Environmental Merit Award
Example #2 - Working with an Internal Customer – WWTF Manager

- Plant was experiencing some upset in the biology of the facility
- Turbid, cloudy effluent, poor settling of sludge, but in compliance
- Manager attributed the treatment problems to “something in the influent”, a Pretreatment issue
- Plant staff were frustrated with Pretreatment
- This unsubstantiated cause was documented in Ops monthly reports
Example #2 - Working with an Internal Customer – WWTF Manager

- Lab data showed nothing unusual in the influent – No Toxics!!!!
- Pretreatment staff were frustrated they could not find the toxic cause and were noted by Operations as the cause in the monthly report
- Pretreatment staff investigated the WWTF thoroughly, collecting samples everywhere
- Samples revealed that the WWTF operators were the cause
- The Return Activated Sludge was being over chlorinated
Some Thoughts for Discussion

- Good Communication is essential to developing and maintaining Effective Working Relationships
- Think things through, research and investigate the problem and develop a good game plan
- Know your Customer – The Restaurant owner you give an overly hard time this afternoon will be pouring a glass of wine for the Mayor tonight! Someone’s phone will ring!
- Educate your Customers - Education is key for effective working relationships and improved environmental compliance
- What do your customers think about the job you do? Gauge how you and your teams are doing. Conduct Internal and External Surveys and use the results to improve.
Roundtable Panelists

**Tim Downs** - Environmental Compliance Supervisor
Charlotte Mecklenburg Utilities
Charlotte, North Carolina

**Ray Fuentes** - Environmental Compliance Manager
Coca-Cola Bottling Co. Consolidated
Charlotte, North Carolina

**Mike Lingerfelt**
Supervisor/ORC
Irwin Wastewater Treatment Plant
Charlotte, North Carolina