



UA WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

January 2020

For More Information
Contact:
WQP Program Manager:
UA International
Representative

KURT STEENHOEK
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Four training
modules offered for:

WQP Fundamentals
UA Contractor Partners
UA Craftsmen

WQP Plumbing
UA Plumbers

WQP Fire Protection
UA Sprinkler Fitters

WQP Mechanical
UA Pipefitters and
Service Techs

Two ASSE
Certifications for:

Contractor Partners
Project Managers
Administrators

UA Craftsmen
Plumbers
Sprinkler Fitters
Service Techs
Pipefitters



Does the United Association have a position on water quality?

In June of 2018 the *UA Water Quality Program Policy Brief* was released to offer an overview of water security accompanied by a strategy to use the skillsets of all UA crafts to protect the health of North America.

What is the *Policy Brief*?

To protect the health of North America the United Association researched and investigated reoccurring water resilience failures due to metals, chemicals, and bacteria. In response a UA Task Force was formed, led by International Representative Kurt Steenhoek, to formulate counter-measures that every local can participate in to protect their own neighbors and families.

What does the *Policy Brief* address?

The Policy Brief found that contaminants that can compromise internal water quality typically fall into three main categories: (a) bacteria (e.g., Legionella); (b) metals (e.g., lead, copper, galvanized pipe), and (c) chemicals. While these problems can affect external water supply systems, research indicates that such threats are also posing increased risks to internal water systems.

Which markets are most affected by water quality?

The UA Policy Brief and Pilot Program identified four specific market sectors each facing their own unique challenges:

Municipal – Water suppliers are the companies that provide water for general and domestic use. Suppliers are responsible for all customers in an agreed geographical region and customers are currently unable to switch from one water supplier to another. Your water supplier has a duty to supply you with a continuous supply of water at an adequate pressure for your daily use.

Commercial - Water flow in commercial building pipes is generally slower and dependent on water usage. Minimal or no water usage can affect water quality. AIG Insurance has required their building operators to implement a water management program based on ASHRAE 188.

Healthcare – June 2017, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services mandated hospitals, skilled nursing homes, and critical access hospitals comply with ASHRAE 188.

Education – Schools at every level from K-12 to community colleges, and every university all manage piped systems at risk for chemical, bacteria, and metals. All of these institutions have plumbing, mechanical, and fire protection piping and devices that put the occupants and workers at risk.

What is the CMS Mandate?

On June 2, 2017, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a mandate requiring all certified Medicare and Medicaid facilities to have water management plans that meet ASHRAE 188 industry standards to reduce the risk of Legionella. CMS expects applicable facilities to comply or risk citation for non-compliance with CMS Conditions of Participation.





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Why is the CMS Mandate important?

The immediate nature of the mandate caused the focus to be on the healthcare market first. For many reasons, if healthcare risks can be assessed and managed for compliance with ASHRAE 188, then the other three sectors could also be solved using the same skill sets, protocols, and documentation.

What is ASHRAE 188?

This standard provides minimum legionellosis risk management strategies for the design, construction, commissioning, operation, maintenance, repair, replacement, and expansion of new and existing buildings and their associated piped systems and components.

How is ASHRAE 188 implemented in healthcare facilities?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention produced a toolkit for building owners and facility managers. The CDC toolkit aims to provide an easy-to-understand interpretation of ASHRAE Standard 188 to help building owners and managers evaluate the water system and devices in their building(s) to see if they need a program, and then develop an effective water management program. All mechanical, fire protection, and potable water systems are required to be mapped, assessed, monitored, controlled, verified, and documented to be in compliance.

How does the UA offer compliance to the healthcare industry?

In 2018, the United Association created and launched the UA Water Quality Program. This program provides risk assessment for the piping industry. Signatory contractors and all UA crafts are certified in the fundamentals of the healthcare water quality issues.

How is compliance accomplished?

Each contractor and UA member participates in a four-hour training module followed by a voluntary ASSE 12000 examination. Additionally, each UA member attends eight hours of craft specific training with ASSE 12000 validation.

What is ASSE 12000?

This standard provides general knowledge of pathogens, biohazards and infectious diseases for plumbing, piping, and mechanical systems workers, or any individual who has the potential for exposure to pathogens, biohazards or other potentially infectious material (OPIM), with the objective of providing continuing education. Eligible individuals include any person with an interest in pathogens, biohazards and infectious diseases.

What is the next step?

Right now UA locals have certified instructors ready to provide training to contractors, pipefitters, service technicians (both plumbing and HVACR) and sprinkler fitters. Instructor training will be offered in August at the Instructor Training Program.





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Is there a pre-requisite to the instructor training?

No pre-requisite courses are required for contractor or local training. Here are the ITP courses and course descriptions:

4050 WQP Plumbing:

North America's water delivery infrastructure requires major improvements or needs to be replaced. This critical need impacts all water sources, pipes, faucets, heating and cooling systems, and fire protection systems. This course will provide the participant with the skills necessary to develop and implement a water quality risk management plan for plumbing and potable water systems. The purpose of this course is to provide minimum criteria, identified by industry consensus, to ensure compliance with the referenced standards and codes. Participants will map, monitor, identify risk, evaluate control measures, and provide documentation as required by ASHRAE 188-2018. This course will also provide the training, education and a ASSE 12061 certification for plumbers working on these systems.

6080 WQP Mechanical

North America's water delivery infrastructure requires major improvements or needs to be replaced. This critical need impacts all water sources, pipes, faucets, heating and cooling systems, and fire protection systems. This course will provide the participant with the skills necessary to develop and implement a water quality risk management plan for mechanical systems. The purpose of this course is to provide minimum criteria, identified by industry consensus, to ensure compliance with the referenced standards and codes. Participants will map, monitor, identify risk, evaluate control measures, and provide documentation as required by ASHRAE 188-2018. This course will also provide the training, education and a ASSE 12062 certification for pipe fitters and service technicians working on these systems.

7051 WQP Fire Protection

North America's water delivery infrastructure requires major improvements or needs to be replaced. This critical need impacts all water sources, pipes, faucets, heating and cooling systems, and fire protection systems. This course will provide the participant with the skills necessary to develop and implement a water quality risk management plan for water-based fire protection systems. The purpose of this course is to provide minimum criteria, identified by industry consensus, to ensure compliance with the referenced standards and codes. Participants will map, monitor, identify risk, evaluate control measures, and provide documentation as required by ASHRAE 188-2018. This course will also provide the training, education and a ASSE 12063 certification for sprinkler fitters working on these systems.

How do contractors receive training and certification?

Signatory contractors in good standing in your local can be invited by the business manager to attend the WQP Fundamental 4-hour class. During the class the contractor will receive an Application Handbook and be offered a certification exam to qualify for ASSE 12060.

What if local members are currently working in hospitals right now?

This program opens the door for the UA craftsmen to responsibly work more man-hours in order to comply with the CMS mandate for risk assessment of every piped system. For ASHRAE 188 compliance, the local members will document their activities, submit these forms to the contractor's designated representative, who then compiles the data from all UA crafts. At that time, the healthcare facility will receive the record of mapping, monitoring, verification, and control measures implemented at their facility.

