



State of Alaska;
Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic
Development; Division of Community and Regional Affairs

Operations Management for Rural Utilities Syllabus

Instructors
RUBA Staff

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Office Locations
Anchorage
Bethel
Dillingham
Fairbanks
Juneau
Kotzebue
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Course Overview

The course builds the skills and knowledge needed for the operations management of a small water and wastewater utility in rural Alaska. The instructors present eight lessons with topics that include working with operators, safety and emergency planning, operations and maintenance scheduling, data collection and reporting, public relations, asset management and inventory control, financial management and best practices. See “Course Content” below for details within each lesson.

The course is 32 hours long and can be taught online using a learning management system or in person at one of our office locations. If the course is taught in person travel scholarships are available for those who successfully complete the class.

Who Should Take the Course?

Municipal clerks, utility clerks, treasurers, bookkeepers, managers, administrators, chiefs, mayors, and council members who are involved in the managerial and financial operations of the utility. In the RUBA program’s partnership with the Department of Environmental Conservation, water and wastewater operators can earn 3.2 core continuing education units (CEUs).

Operations and Maintenance Best Practices

The course qualifies for Operation and Maintenance Best Practices points used to determine eligibility and prioritization for community sanitation projects. Here is the link to more information about Best Practices.

[Operations and Maintenance Best Practices](#)

Homework and Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend each day, read lesson materials before class, participate in discussions and lesson exercises take a pre-test and post-test, and draft action plans to take back to their communities.

Additional Information

Here is the link to more information about the RUBA program, our approach to helping communities, and class offerings.

[Rural Utility Business Advisor Program](#)

Course Content

Lesson	Subject
Lesson 1: Working with Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Welcome/Introductions▪ RUBA Program Overview▪ Public Water and Wastewater systems▪ Regulatory Requirements▪ Operator Certification and Training▪ The Utility Team▪ Performance Management

Lesson 2: Safety and Emergency Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Why is Safety Important?▪ How to Identify Safety Hazards▪ How to Mitigate Hazards▪ Safety Awareness, Training, Equipment, Recordkeeping▪ Fire Prevention and Emergency Evacuation Plans▪ Vulnerability Assessments▪ Emergency Response Plan
Lesson 3: Operations and Maintenance Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ What is O&M?▪ Creating and O&M Plan▪ Creating a Work Schedule▪ Scheduling Non-routine Tasks
Lesson 4: Data Collection and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Regulatory Data▪ Operating Data▪ Data Management System
Lesson 5: Public Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Identifying Expectations▪ Identifying Roles and Responsibilities▪ Providing Good Service▪ Community Outreach▪ Customer Requests▪ The Consumer Confidence Report
Lesson 6: Asset Management and Inventory Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Asset Management in General▪ What are Your Utility's Fixed Assets?▪ Replacing Fixed Assets▪ Operating Supplies▪ Managing Inventory▪ Purchasing Policies
Lesson 7: Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The Manager's Role▪ Rate Setting▪ Budgeting▪ Implementing the Budget▪ Collections▪ Other Policies and Procedures
Lesson 8: Best Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Technical Capacity▪ Managerial Capacity▪ Financial Capacity
