

Important Issues By Mike Dill

We have some important stuff to address because it's important and you need to know. (NTK) Next time you see Jim Barton, from Orleans, tell him he's a wuss for not playing golf, just cause it's barely snowing. If you go to lunch with Russ Ahrens from Liberty, bring your own heat and Steck deliver your own messages to Twig, don't hide behind me and by the way, its only 65, not 85 like you said.

Now that the important stuff has been noted, let us proceed. Many plants are sending out samples for compliance reporting, and I agree from a budget standpoint it may be the economic thing to do. However, you must still do in house or process control monitoring. I am not talking about dailies such as temp, pH or Cl₂ residuals. How about return rates, SVI's, volatile reduction, gas production, CO₂ content, acid to alkalinity ratio's. I have probably forgotten some and yes, not all plants have to do the same testing. I'm talking about testing to make the process better, getting more bang for the buck.

You have to spend it, so what's wrong with getting the most out of every nickel. Just because your plant is in compliance every month, doesn't mean it's doing the best removal it can. Unless your plant has serious mechanical problems or is old and tired, meeting permit isn't that hard. Now buckle up because I'm going to have to use one of those four letter words. WORK, settle down the feeling will pass, if not take two aspirin.

Before you call me with your story of poor design, bad equipment, didn't get the right training, think about it. This may be hard to believe, but I have worked in systems where money wasn't a problem, because there wasn't any. I have also been allowed to buy as long as it was within budget, so planning was essential. Maybe the reason you can't afford it, is no one took the time to plan or do a budget. If the budget hasn't changed since 1995, perhaps, just perhaps, a review could be helpful. Just a thought.

Back to testing. If you let things slide because the results are always the same, be careful, you are about to step into that gray area known as complacency. We are all guilty of this. Because we have repeated the same, over and over, or done it without problems, we get complacent and lose concentration and forget our objective. The dictionary defines complacency as a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, while often unaware of unpleasant possibilities. Think about it, through the years how many pH tests, temperatures or chlorine residuals have you done. We know the expected results, but what happens when the unexpected happens. Is the sample bad, has the lab equipment gone funky. Maybe the sample collection was mishandled. You non-lumpy water guys, there is supposed to be a .2 Cl₂ residual in the farthest part of the system. What happens if you test and no residual. Maybe your test kit could use some new reagents. Remember not to spit in the sample before testing. Ring a bell.

Regardless, if its process control or compliance monitoring, it should be done the same. Following prescribed procedures and (Teresa from DOH will like this), practice lab proficiency.

One final thought, Skip from Alfred, remember to let Tom drive, for he remembers the way home.