American Water Works Association
VirginiaSection

2026 VA AWWA Rodeo Events Rules



Note: No walk-on registrants on the day of events. All contestants shall be pre-registered. All contestants shall be active members, either Individual or Utility, of the Virginia Section of the AWWA to compete.
Revised July 2026

VA AWWA Competition - Rules and Regulations HYDRANT HYSTERIA

INTRODUCTION

1. The Competition is a measure of the team's skill at assembling a hydrant quickly, totally and accurately. All parts will be assembled in the proper manner and the reassembled hydrant shall be tested by the judges for its ability to operate correctly.
2. Each team will be required to completely assemble a hydrant commonly utilized by a utility. The event is timed with multiple teams assembling a hydrant at the same time.
3. At the competition there will be three (3) or more (depending on number of competitors) fire hydrants that will be used by the competitors. While one or more teams are competing, the next team will be staging at the next hydrant.

DISCLAIMER

5. VA 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.
6. 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.**
7. This competition is officiated over by very 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.
8. In order to be eligible, Utilities must verify that each person is authorized to compete. Details regarding eligibility are noted in the next section.

ELIGIBILITY & MEMBERSHIP

10. Each Hydrant Hysteria Competition team shall consist of no more than 2 competitors and a coach. The two competitors may consist of two males or two females. The coach may be either male or female.
11. Each Utility may enter one (1) men's team and one (1) women's team in the Hydrant Hysteria Competition. The winning Utility from the previous year's event may enter one additional team of the same type (I.E. Men's Champion may enter an additional men's team, Women's Champion may enter an additional women's team).

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

REGISTRATION

14. To enter, follow the instructions on the Distribution Rodeo web page. **No registration is available onsite.** Each competitor must attend the Mandatory Competitor's Meeting at the Staging Area prior to the start of the competition. Among other things, the timing and order of competition will be determined at this meeting. Only competitors are allowed at this meeting.
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 must make their own travel and lodging arrangements. VA AWWA will not make travel or lodging arrangements for any team. VA AWWA does not reimburse travel expenses (airfare, lodging, food) for any team.

HOW YOU WIN

17. A time period of no more than ten (10) minutes shall be allowed for the judges to disassemble the hydrant. Once the judges have inspected all the parts, the competitors will be asked to assume the starting position of their choice. The head official will count down to “GO” to initiate the start of the competition. Once the team has completed assembling the fire hydrant, the competitors will raise their hands to signify that they are finished and the judges will examine and open the hydrant to check for operability.
18. The ***Official Time*** for the Competitor’s turns will be the raw time to assemble the hydrant with any accrued penalties added. The Competitor with the fastest ***Official Time*** registered shall be declared the winner.

WHAT WINNING TEAM RECEIVES

19. The VA AWWA Annual Hydrant Hysteria Champion is automatically eligible for the next year’s VA AWWA Hydrant Hysteria Competition as a special entry and is not counted as the Utility’s entry.
20. The Championship team (including coach) will:
    - Be presented with one traveling team trophy to keep at the close of the competition for one year.
    - Be presented with individual trophies for each team member.
    - May be featured on the VA AWWA website and in publications.
    - Receive a stipend for expenses to attend the 2026 ACE Conference in Washington DC. (In general, expense reimbursement covers transportation costs to and from the convention site, hotel, and meals).
    - Amount of Stipend will be determined in December of each year and will be based on location of the Annual AWWA ACE Conference. Amount will be no less than $1,000 per team member.
    - Winners will be informed of the exact amount before ACE Registration opens.

21. The Second and Third-place teams will:
    - Be presented with individual trophies for each team member.
    - May be featured on the VA AWWA website and in publications.

COMPETITION

22. There is no such thing as a faulty fire hydrant. All fire hydrants were received in good working condition prior to the hydrant hysteria competition. THE HYDRANT MUST WORK, OR A PENALTY WILL BE INCURRED. See no. 58.
23. Any tools, equipment, and other supplies provided for this competition that are broken will be considered to be broken by neglect of the team and will not be replaced during their turn.
24. Teams will be able to ask to grease (Food Grade) the hydrant before each run if the judge has determined it is warranted.
25. The location and the size of the space for the Hydrant Hysteria competition will be determined at the discretion of the VA AWWA Distribution Systems Committee and dependent on the layout of the facility. The work area for the Hydrant Hysteria competition shall be large enough to accommodate all competitors and judges and their equipment. Equal space must be provided for each team. Every effort must be made to provide equal work opportunities for all competitors. A minimum of 10' clear area shall be provided between the working area and the spectators to afford safety from tools or materials that may accidentally slip from someone's grasp during the competition.
26. In the case of multiple competitors competing at the same time, all work shall be conducted on a suitable work area to provide each competitor adequate room to move about freely to assemble their hydrants without crowding. It is preferred, but not required, to have some type of partition between competitors to secure their individual work.
27. Fire hydrants will be totally disassembled by the Judges and Volunteers down to the lower barrel and shoe. All the hydrants used by every competitor will be identical.
28. All competitors will be allowed to examine all the hydrant parts for five (5) minutes prior to the start of the competition. Each fire hydrant shall always contain the parts needed to completely assemble the fire hydrant.
29. The competitors will be allowed to position their tools and the hydrant parts where they want, with the stipulation that no tools or parts can be touching, and nothing may be placed inside the frame of the hydrant before the start. Both hands must be empty and not touching the hydrant or any tools when the competition begins.
30. Tools must be engaged on a given part and tightening motion is a must.
31. Competitors will be allowed two runs during the competition when time allows. Winner will be determined as the fastest time from all runs of all competitors.
32. Once a competitor has thrown their hands in the air, signaling they have completed their run, they cannot touch the hydrant again. If that team member touches the hydrant it will result in procedural violation.

EQUIPMENT & MATERIALS

31. Tools and competition hydrants will be provided by the VA AWWA Distribution Systems Committee for use at the event.
32. All o-rings and gaskets, with the exception of the Bonnet o-ring will be removed prior to competition.
33. Cap chains will be removed prior to competition.
34. Fire hydrants shall be the type complying with AWWA C502, “Dry Barrel Hydrant”. The size of the hydrant can either be 4 ½” or 5 1/4’’ barrel hydrant depending on which hydrant manufacturer is being used. Each year the hydrant manufacturer and model may vary and will be announced in adequate time prior to the competition.
35. The hydrant that will be used in the 2025 VA AWWA Distribution Rodeo competition will be the M&H 129.
36. Tools provided include:
    - 2-14" pipe wrenches
    - 2-1/2" socket wrenches
    - 1-3/4" open end wrench
    - 1-3/4" socket
    - 1-15/16" socket
    - 1-15/16" open end wrench
    - 1 T-Handle wrench
    - 1-standard hydrant operating wrench
    - 1-hydrant seat removal tool (no guide)
    - 1-hydrant thrust nut wrench

JUDGING

37. The officiating and supervision of each event shall be the responsibility of the head official who shall have extensive experience in hydrant maintenance and total familiarity with the type and manufacturer of the hydrant to be used in the competition. There shall be three (3) officials for each team, which could amount in a total of up to twelve (12) judges overseeing a total of four (4) competition hydrants.
38. The number of teams for each round shall be limited to the space available for the competitors to perform adequately or to the number of officials available for each round.
39. The officials shall be responsible for timing the events, with the Head Official being the one to announce the START and STOP of the event. Each team’s time as recorded by the official, plus any penalties accrued, shall be used to determine the official time for each team. The head official shall be in charge of the competition and after consulting with the other officials of any infraction of the rules shall make the ruling as required by the circumstances for any penalties to be assessed.
40. The head official, determined by the VA AWWA Distribution Systems Committee, shall see that all tools, materials, and teams are in the required positions prior to starting the event. He/She shall also ensure the work area is free from any obstructions or spectators.
41. The officials shall watch for safety violations during the actual events and assess appropriate penalty times as required. During the time of the event not taken up by the actual competition, the officials shall see that all preparations for the event are accomplished in a safe manner.
42. No judge will be assigned to a team who works for the same organization the team represents.
43. There are (3) judges per hydrant:
    i. Timing Judge – the Timing Judge is responsible for recording the three (3) times and any penalties that may be assessed.

ii. Umpire – the Umpire is responsible for checking all the bolts and caps to make sure that they are tight by using a hydrant wrench.
iii. Operations Judge – the Operations Judge is responsible for testing the hydrant and confirming the hydrant was assembled correctly.

44. The official time will stop when both competitors have placed their tools on the ground and have both raised their hands.

SAFETY & CONDUCT

44. Standard water utility safety practices will be observed at all times during the competition. Any flagrant violations will be penalized by the addition of time to the competitor's raw time as described in Procedural Violations.
45. 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 VA AWWA Staff and the VA AWWA Distribution Systems Committee Chair.
46. Teams will not be allowed to participate if they are wearing articles of clothing or using equipment plainly displaying offensive language, slogans, or graphics.
47. Safety equipment will be required to be provided by each team member. Teams without proper personal protective equipment as described below will not be allowed to compete until they have obtained the proper personal protective equipment in a reasonable amount of time during the competition. The safety equipment required of each team member shall be:
    - Head protection for both team members shall be worn during the event. The head protection (hard hats) shall conform to the **American National Standard Safety Requirements for Industrial Head Protection (ANSI Z89.1-2014).** If a hard hat falls or is knocked off a team member, the hat must be replaced on the team member's head as soon as possible or a safety violation will be imposed. Head protection must be worn in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and is not to be worn backwards.
    - Eye protection (Glasses or Goggles) are required to be worn by both team members during the hydrant competition. Eye protection must conform to the **American National Standard for Occupational and Education Eye and Face Protection (ANSI Z87.1-2015).**
    - Gloves are required to be worn by both team members. Gloves shall be full-fingered and suitable for construction related tasks. Lab type gloves, such as latex material, and gloves without complete fingers are not acceptable for the competition. Sport gloves with full fingers are allowed.
    - Foot Protection shall be required to be worn by both team members (men and women) and shall conform to the **ASTM F243-17 - Standard Specification for Performance Requirements for Protective (Safety) Toe Cap Footwear** (incorporates ANSI Z41.1 by reference). Sneakers and dress shoes that meet this standard are also allowed.
48. Long or short sleeved shirts and long-legged trousers are required to be worn by all members of the team during the event. No tanks or cutoff shirts, and no shorts are allowed.
49. No personal bags will be allowed on the floor.
50. Children under the age of 16 entering the Exhibit Hall during show hours need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. A parent or guardian assumes all risks and responsibility for the safety of his or her child.

51. All elements of the competition must remain within the confines of the designated area.

PENALTIES

52. Various penalties will be assessed by the head official for any infraction of the rules as described herein or for any flagrant violation of normal safety practices.
53. The penalties will be in the form of a predetermined number of seconds added to the total time of the team's event time which will then be the OFFICIAL TIME of that event.
54. In the event of any disagreement with penalty decision, the head official's decision is final.
55. There will be NO INSTANT REPLAY allowed for reversing any decision after the head official has made a final determination of any infraction in these rules.
56. Penalties shall be:
    - Safety violation such as throwing of tools, PPE penalty, etc. (+10 seconds each)
    - Procedural violation by any member of the team. This is a general penalty for actions of the team that may not specifically be covered in these rules but are of sufficient gravity to the Judges as to warrant a penalty. (+10 second penalty)
    - Hydrant parts not assembled correctly:
        - Loose or missing hydrant bolt (+5 seconds each)
        - Loose or missing nozzle caps (+5 seconds each)
        - Seat assembly not tight or screwed in all the way (+10 second penalty))
        - Loose hold down nut on weather cap or No attempt made with tool (+10 second penalty)
57. Hydrant is not completely facing forward (+10 second penalty)
58. Hydrant fails to operate correctly (DQ)
59. Hydrant is missing any parts (+10 second penalty)
60. Hydrant part incorrectly installed (+10 second penalty)
61. Coach enters or assist the competitors in the competition area (+10 second penalty)
62. Tools placed in pockets before or after start of event (+5 second penalty)
63. Tools left on the hydrant when competitors are finished (+5 second penalty)
64. Tools not used on any bolt, nut, caps and lower valve assembly (+5 second penalty per)
65. Tools and parts cannot be touching each other prior or during competition (+10 second penalty)
66. Teams must use the tools provided to tighten down all parts of the fir e hydrant when assembling is taking place. **A tool must be used every time when tightening hydrant parts. Hand tightening will result in a penalty.**
67. No tools can be stored in hydrant frame at any time during the competition (+ 10 second penalty)
68. No tool can be held under arm or between legs during competition (+5 second penalty per)
69. Part of tool must be touching ground before releasing (+10 second penalty)

The hydrant for the 2026 Hydrant Hysteria is the Clow Medallion



