

A Challenging and Rewarding Job

Working in the water/wastewater industry can be extremely rewarding since you are providing an important service for Ohioans. It just might be one of the most important positions in the world since no one can live without water. It takes knowledgeable, conscientious people to deliver safe drinking water and to ensure wastewater is treated and discharged in an environmentally safe manner.

It takes special people to do this job. People who like to work with their hands and have an interest in biology, chemistry and mathematics are well-suited for the job. Water and wastewater operators perform a wide variety of tasks. They may be repairing a leak in a water line, running a backhoe, welding pipe and fixing a pump one day and the next day working in the laboratory testing samples for pathogens and microorganisms or presenting information to the town board or the public.

A college degree is of value but is not required. This career does require a great deal of training and experience. If you like a challenge and the responsibility of protecting public health and the environment, this could be the job for you!

For More Information:

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Operator Certification Hotline
(800) 411-OPCT
epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert

**United States Environmental
Protection Agency**
Safe Drinking Water Hotline
(800) 426-4791

Ohio Rural Water Association
(740) 455-3911
www.ohioruralwater.org

**American Water Works Association
Ohio Section**
(844) 766-2845
www.oawwa.org

Operator Training Committee of Ohio
(614) 268-6826
www.otco.org

Ohio Water Environment Association
(614) 488-5800
www.ohiowea.org

**Great Lakes Rural Community
Assistance Program**
(800) 775-9767
www.greatlakesrcap.org

California State University
Sacramento Office of Water Programs
(916) 278-6142
www.owp.csus.edu

Water and Wastewater Operators



*Protect and Promote
Ohio's Public
Health and Environment*



Requirements

Water and wastewater operators serve Ohioans by protecting public health and the environment. It is extremely important that people receive safe drinking water and that wastewater is treated and discharged in an environmentally safe manner.

Water and wastewater operators are certified by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA). There are minimum educational and experience requirements depending on the level of certification desired. All levels require a high school diploma or equivalent, on-the-job experience and continuing education.

Eligibility requirements include:

- High school diploma or the equivalent, including GED or completion of applicable vocational training program.
- Operating experience from six months to five years, depending on education and the level of certification.
- Pass an approved Ohio EPA certification exam.
- Renewal of certification requires completion of eight to 24 hours of continuing education (contact hours) every two years, depending on level of certification.

Preparation

For water and wastewater operators it is especially helpful to have some science and math knowledge as well as some mechanical ability. It is recommended students take preparation courses in biology, chemistry and mathematics, as well as some shop courses like carpentry, metal working, plumbing, heavy equipment or automotive studies.

Need-to-know exam criteria can be found on the operator certification website under the Exam Information tab.

Experience

Schedule a visit to your local water or wastewater treatment plant. You might be able to gain some experience through a summer job or internship. It would give you the chance to see if this is the career for you. The amount of on-the-job experience depends on the classification you are trying to achieve. Details can be found on our website.



Operator Certification

Many colleges and training providers offer courses to prepare for operator certification. Ohio EPA also has approved lists of home study and online courses available to prepare for certification. A list of water and wastewater course providers can be found at:

epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/opcert.

The Rewards

Depending on the size of the system, salaries can begin in the mid-\$20,000s and reach more than \$100,000 at the upper level. Almost all municipal systems offer health care and retirement plans.

One of the greatest rewards for water and wastewater operators is knowing they are protecting public health and the environment and providing a much needed and valuable service to Ohioans.

Opportunity

“Within the next decade, the job market for water supply operators holds the promise of becoming a buyer’s market. Because qualified operators are expected to be in short supply, those with ambition may see more opportunities for advancement, a choice of locations and utility size, work schedule flexibility, employer-supported training, and negotiable wages and benefits.”

The American Water Works Association