

Water & Wastewater Career Information

Career:

Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operators -

Where does the clean water flowing out of your kitchen faucet come from? It was pumped from a lake or other natural source to a water-treatment plant. And after you use the water, it goes to a wastewater-treatment plant. At both facilities, plant operators control processes and equipment that remove pollutants from the water. They take water samples and read meters and gauges. After examining this data, they might adjust equipment or the release of chemicals to ensure that the water is safe. And that's just a typical day. As an operator, you may sometimes have to handle emergencies, remaining calm while working in dangerous conditions.

Water treatment plant operators control processes and equipment that remove pollutants in water so it is safe to drink. Wastewater treatment plant operators perform similar duties to ensure wastewater can be returned safely to natural areas or be reused.

Did You Know?

Workers in this field must earn state certification by passing an exam.

Are You Ready To...?

- Use tools to maintain and repair pumps, valves, and other equipment
- Read maps, charts, and graphs
- Work both indoors and outdoors, sometimes in noisy, smelly, or dirty locations
- Deal with hazards, such as slippery walkways, dangerous gases, and broken equipment
- Work night, weekend, and holiday shifts, since plants are always running

It Helps To Be...

Comfortable using machines and tools, you should enjoy the sciences, math, and computers. You also need to stay calm in an emergency and work well under pressure.

Make High School Count

- Do your best in math, chemistry, and biology.
- Gets experience working with computers.
- Sign up for shop courses to learn how to use tools and machines.
- Stay in school. You can't get this job without a high school diploma.

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Did You Know?

The government establishes standards for clean water, and operators have to keep up with these regulations. You can find them all through the State agency of Energy & Environmental Affairs:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/regulations/regulations-and-standards.html#7>

Outlook:

Government economists expect jobs for water and wastewater treatment plant operators to grow about as fast as the average for all careers through 2020. A growing population will require more water- and wastewater-treatment services. New treatment plants and the expansion of current plants will create jobs for operators. Also, operators will be needed to help treatment plants follow new safety and environmental rules.

Job prospects should be excellent, not only because of job growth but also because many of these workers will likely retire soon. In addition, you won't face much competition for jobs in this field because the work is physically hard, dirty, and dangerous.

Compensation:

The U.S. Department of Labor estimated that operators of water- and wastewater-treatment plants earned an average salary of \$43,530 in 2011.

How to Schedule an Exam:

[Download information](#) on the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission's website to schedule an online exam directly with AMP.

http://www.neiwpcc.org/training/training-docs/online_training.pdf

You no longer need to contact NEIWPCC in order to take an exam. Exams will only be administered at AMP testing centers and are by appointment only. A current list of AMP Assessment centers, including addresses and driving directions may be viewed at:

www.go_amp.com.

How to Obtain a Water/Wastewater License:

Once you have obtained a PASSING grade for the online exam, you must [download the online exam license application form](#) and submit it to NEIWPCC with your PASSING exam results and license fee. NEIWPCC will then issue your new wastewater license.

<http://www.neiwpcc.org/training/training-docs/licenseapplicationNov10.pdf>

There is no need to contact NEIWPCC for non-passing exam results. You may schedule and re-take another on-line exam at your earliest convenience.

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References:

To download a reference list to assist in the preparation for the Massachusetts Municipal or Industrial Wastewater Certification Exam, please visit:

http://www.neiwpsc.org/training/training-docs/mwotexam_reference.pdf

Other Certifications:

[Combined Grade 7 Upgrade](#) - Massachusetts Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Note: Grade 7 Upgrade Application must be mailed to the Commonwealth of Mass.

<http://www.neiwpsc.org/training/training-docs/magrade7.pdf>