

Proposed OIT (Operator In Training) Program

Purpose:

The water and wastewater industry is experiencing significant challenges with attracting and retaining professional labor resources due to a combination of factors. Implementing an OIT program at the District could provide an opportunity to participate in preparing the next generation of water industry professionals while obtaining additional staffing resources cost effectively.

Currently, individuals must perform 1800 hours of work as an Operator in training (OIT) and pass a state examination, in order to obtain certification as a licensed wastewater operator. Unlike these restrictions for wastewater certification.

To work independently and make operational and process control changes at the wastewater facility, individuals MUST hold a valid wastewater treatment plant operator certification.

Program Goals:

The program is incorporating an initial 6-month OIT assignment with regular performance evaluation and feedback. During this initial 6-month period, OITs will have exposure working in all areas of wastewater treatment within a special district organization.

OITs will be expected to perform the following duties by the end of probation (6 months):

Technical

- Maintain a safe work environment and understand risks.
- Perform all required daily rounds and reads.
- Perform all required daily, weekly and monthly sampling and monitoring.
- Understand the wastewater treatment process and equipment.
- Perform equipment maintenance, building and ground maintenance and proper housekeeping.
- Perform all required Process control activities.
- Understand and obtain proficiency performing automatic process functions.
- Understand and obtain proficiency with manual process control/operation capabilities.
- Perform diagnostics and troubleshooting of equipment and plant performance.
- Accept and implement training and shared knowledge to complete the above tasks

Organizational

- Understand the requirements for successful employment in a special district or local government employer environment

This list is not intended to be comprehensive, and being a small facility, there is significant likelihood of the unexpected as no days are the same. Our operators in training must learn and be willing to respond to emergencies, alarms, and system failures with quick thinking and calm.

Outcomes:

After the initial probation period of 6 months, GM and CPO will review OIT. Possible outcomes of review include:

- District will release the OIT, documenting hours completed to be signed off with the state by the CPO. At this time, the District may select a different OIT candidate and initiate the process again.
- District will extend the OIT assignment for an additional 6-months with no guaranty of employment and no benefits. At this time the District may consider pay adjustment.

Partnerships:

The success of this OIT program depends on partnerships with neighboring sewer agencies and local community colleges. Collaboration with the wastewater education programs at Santa Rosa and Solano Colleges will better ensure high quality candidates that possess the knowledge and traits to be successful in the industry and as participants in this OIT program.